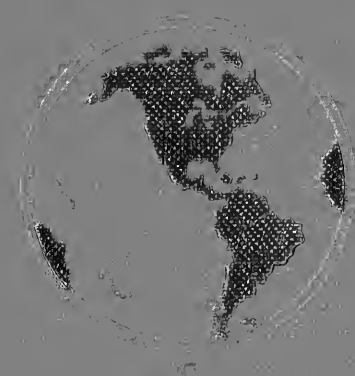


Around the World in Any Number of Days

By
Maurice Baring



*Illustrated by
and with the story*



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Round the World
In any number of days



MY TICKET IS FOR NEW ZEALAND (page 4)

ROUND THE WORLD IN ANY NUMBER OF DAYS

By Maurice Baring

ILLUSTRATED BY B. T. B., VINCENT LYNCH
AND WALTER J. ENRIGHT



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ROUND THE WORLD IN ANY NUMBER OF DAYS

I BELIEVE there is a school of people who say the world is flat. I asked H. G. Wells (who ought to know) whether the world was flat. He said he thought it improbable (mark the scepticism of H. G. Wells!), but he said the proofs generally given of the world's roundness were bosh. The dogmas of science go round and round, from reaction to progress, and from progress to reaction, like the dogmas of medicine. One has only to remain very conservative to find one's self a revolutionary. "But," some one may say, "whether the world is round and you are going round it, or whether it is flat and you are going across (or along?) it, that is no reason for describing your voyage — nowadays a hackneyed affair; you might just as well describe a journey round the Place de la Concorde or Trafalgar Square."

My answer to this is, I might. But all journeys differ with the differing traveler. I write partly to please myself, partly in the hope of pleasing others, and partly in the hope (a pious hope) of gain.

Tilbury: June 21

THERE is a dock-strike going on: but the leaders say this has been defeated; the newspapers say it is over. I reach Tilbury Docks by noon of Friday, June 21. There, evidences of a strike are manifest in the shape of a local body of special police. The porter who wheels my luggage points them out and alludes to them in vivid and disrespectful terms. He says they are a pack of — you know the rest.

I am sailing in one of the Orient ships: one of the big ones, twelve thousand tons or so.

As soon as I get on board the lift-boy assures me that there are only eight old hands on board — all the rest have struck.

“But who are the new hands?” I ask. “Casual amateurs?”

“Oh! just any one we would get,” he says.

It turns out that five hundred members of the police have been on board the ship for a week.

Coaling has been carried out with the utmost difficulty. Most of the new stewards have never been to sea. Nobody knows where anything is. The steward in the smoking-room does n't know where the materials for liquid refreshment are concealed.

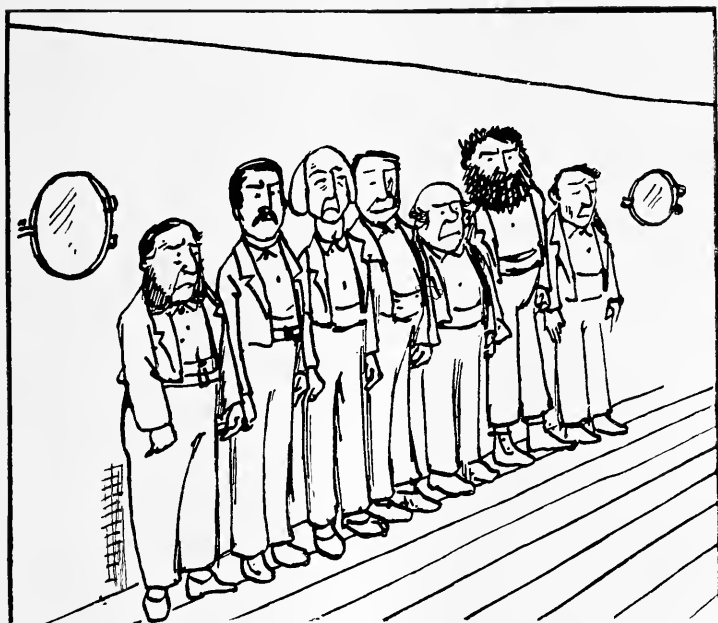
"But will they be found before the end of the voyage?" I hear a man inquire in some trepidation.

The steward says they will. There is a sigh of relief, and soon we are steaming down the Thames. I shall be in the ship till we reach Australia. My ticket is for New Zealand.

There is a sense of delicious independence and freedom from the fretting ties of everyday life when one starts on a long journey in a big liner. And, watching the lights of Brighton flashing in the night, I murmur to myself the words of the hymn: —

"Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away."

Somebody ought one day to write the epic of



THE STEWARDS

Brighton, just as Mr. Arnold Bennett has written the epic of the Five Towns. Arnold Bennett has given us pictures of Brighton, it is true; and as for Sussex, no county has such a crowd of enthusiastic poets to sing its praise. But when I hear the word Sussex spoken, the picture it evokes for me has nothing to do with any of that lyrical enthusiasm.

I see a third-class railway carriage on a Monday morning full of bluejackets. They are travelling to London from Portsmouth. We have just left Horsham. One of them is looking out of the window; he observes a man sitting on a stile. "Nice easy job that bloke's got," the sailor observes, "watching the tortoises *flash* by."

All this is suggested by the sight of Brighton where, at this very moment, while I am setting out to wander with the antipodes (the expression is Shakespeare's), I know that two friends of mine are dining in that most comfortable of inns, the Royal York Hotel. I wish I were there. . . .

While thus meditating on absent friends, somebody asks me if I play bridge. I say Yes. "Why did you say Yes?" I say to myself, groaning inwardly as I sit down to play. "You know you can't play properly and that you'll spoil the game."

Sure enough I revoke in the first game. However, in my prophetic soul the comforting thought arises that I shan't be asked to play again.

The next morning by breakfast time we have almost reached Plymouth. I know the coast we are passing between Bolt Head and Wembury Point, having been brought up in that little corner of land. I played on those beaches as a child, picnicked on those cliffs, played at robbers and smugglers in those caves. It is like a piece of a dream to see these familiar, these intimate rocks and cliffs, after so many years.

The sea has that peculiar glitter as of a million golden scales, and the sky has something peculiar in the quality of its azure, something luminous,

hazy, and radiant which seems to me to belong to the seas of South Devon, and to the seas of South Devon alone.

Is this really so? Does it, I wonder, strike other people in the same way? Or is the impression I receive due to the unfading spell and the old glamour of childhood.

There is a ruined church nestling in the rocks right down by the waves; there are the paths, and the pools, which were the playground of hundreds of games, and the battlefields of mimic warfare, and the temples of the long thoughts of boyhood.

There are the spots which to childhood's eye seemed one's very own, a sacred and permanent possession, part and parcel of that larger entity of home which was then the centre of one's universe, and seemed to be indestructible and everlasting.

And now! Thirty years after, I have no more to do with it than any of my fellow passengers in

this ship. The place is there, the place is the same, but I am divorced from it. There it is, in sight and almost within reach, but I no longer belong to it. It is far away, a part of the past, a part of the irrevocable, a fugitive facet in a kaleidoscope of memories and dreams.

.

If the world of romance be divided into provinces, each having its capital, Plymouth is certainly the capital of that region in the romantic world of England which concerns the sea. And the last twenty years, which have made such fearful havoc among so much which was characteristically English, have spared Plymouth. Plymouth still smiles over the Sound — between the luxuriant wooded hills of Mount Edgecombe and the forts of Statton Heights, crowned in the distance by the blue rim of Dartmoor. Little cutters, with their spotless sails, are racing in the Sound; two torpedo destroyers are dressed because it is Coronation Day; a German liner has arrived from

New York. Everything is just the same as it used to be thirty years ago.

Just before sunset a real Devonshire shower comes on, veiling the hills in a gray mist, but the sun, only half hidden, silvers the waters. Then the rain drifts away, and the sun sets in a watery glory of gold and silver, and as the twilight deepens, threatening and cloudy, all the lights begin to twinkle on the Hoe.

There are always a lot of lights in Plymouth, but there are more than usual to-night, because the city is illuminated. We steam past the break-water. The Eddystone Light appears and vanishes intermittently far ahead, and behind us Plymouth is twinkling and gleaming and flashing.

"Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,

Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,

An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',

He sees it arl so plainly, as he saw it long ago."

These lines of Newbolt's, from his poem, "Drake's Drum," ring in my memory and seem

now and to-night intolerably appropriate. It begins to drizzle once more, and I feel the well-known smell of the West Country rain all about me, and the years slip by, and the past rises from its tomb, sharp and vivid as the present. . . . I see it all so plainly as I saw it long ago.

All at once forward in the steerage, a party of Welsh emigrants start singing a wailing Celtic chorus, piercingly melancholy, alien and strange, and this chases away the dream, and reminds me that I am on a liner bound for Australia, and that it's raining, and I determine to seek the smoking-room.

Bay of Biscay: June 24

SOMEBODY ought to start a series called "Books by Bores for People who Really Want to Know."

These books would contain that particular information which you need at particular times and seasons, but which you cannot bear to have imparted to you at any other time. Information about the conditions of life on board different liners, for instance. If somebody begins to tell you about this when you are not going on a journey and he has just returned, you withdraw your attention and think of Tom Thumb, as Dr. Johnson did when people talked of the Punic Wars; or, if you are on familiar terms with the informant, you tell him to dry up. But when you are yourself starting on a journey, that is just what you want, in choosing your line and your steamer, and just what you can't get. Nobody knows. It appears to be a dead secret. I am not going to give a particle of that information here, —

I know the result too well. Any digression on any general subject, say the claims of Christian Science, or the merits of Harry Lauder's songs, would be tolerated, but not that; because those things are topics, and this other thing is instruction. Neither children nor grown-up people can bear to be instructed. Children have to submit to it, until the general Children's Strike occurs. Grown-up people need n't and don't, and if people insist on instructing them, they either kill them, as the Greeks killed Socrates, who was a schoolmaster abroad if ever there was one; or they put them in Coventry and isolate them by not listening, as the House of Commons did to Burke and Macaulay; or they damn them by saying, "So-and-so knows a lot, but he is a bore." It need only be said once. The man is done for. He has quaffed an invisible and intangible poison more deadly than hemlock. He is a social leper. His approach is like a bell. Wherever he goes, he makes a desert. He can call it peace, if he likes.

That is why I shall say no word about the arrangements, the huge qualities and advantages, of the steamers of the Orient line.

But to go back to the Series of Books by Bores for People who Really Want to Know: I would suggest the following subjects: —

A Book telling you (A) whom to give tips to, and how much, in country-houses and hotels in all the countries of the world.

And (B) how much to public men, men of business, and like officials, anywhere.

Section (B) would be good reading if written by an expert, because the art of tipping or bribing a Prime Minister is no doubt a delicate one, and though one hears so much about the terrible bribery and corruption in many countries, one so rarely meets any one who has actually himself tipped or bribed either a rich Banker, a Magistrate, a General, an Archbishop, or a Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Gibraltar: June 28

MOST people have been there. For those who
have n't:—

“It looks
Exactly as it does in books.”

We stop there only three hours.

Naples : June 29

ONE often hears people say that Naples is "disappointing." The disappointment depends on what you expect, on your standard of comparison, and on the nature of the conditions under which you see Naples.

There was once upon a time an Englishwoman who came out to Rome to live there. She was the wife of a scholar. She was asked by one of her compatriots whether she liked Rome. She said it was a great come-down after what she had been used to.

"And where," asked the second Englishwoman, "used you to live in England?"

"Surbiton," she answered.

Have you ever seen Surbiton? It is a small suburban town on the Southwestern Railway, about half an hour's distance by rail from London.

Well, if you go to a place like Naples and you

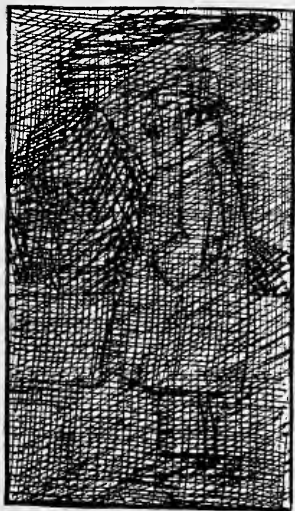
expect to find a place like Sheerness, you will be disappointed.

Then as to the conditions. These depend on the weather; and I know by experience that the weather at Naples can make disappointment a certainty. The first time I went there it rained. That was in spring. The second time I went there it snowed. That was in winter. The third time I went there I chose the month of May so as to insure good weather. There was a thick fog the whole time. You could n't even see Vesuvius. Nevertheless I persevered and went there a fourth time, and was rewarded. This time I found the proper weather for Naples. It is broiling hot, with just a slight sea-breeze.

It is St. Peter's Day, consequently I anticipated that the shops would be shut. I spoke my fear to one of the talkative and gesticulative guides who boarded the ship.

He said No.

"But it's 'festa,' " I said.



NAPLES—THREE IMPRESSIONS



"St. Peter," he answered with a sniff; "St. Peter's the patron Saint of Rome, but here, no!" — and he made a gesture of indifferent contempt, which no man can do so well as an Italian. "We've got St. Januarius," he added.

St. Peter, he gave one to understand, was, as far as Naples is concerned, a very secondary person, a poor affair. And this is odd, because St. Peter was a fisherman, and Naples is a city of fishermen. At Naples St. Januarius overshadows every one and everything which is connected with the Life Sacred: besides the fact of having a miracle that works plumb, and to which the unbeliever bears witness.

. Some of the shops were shut, some were open. The churches were decorated with red hangings and crowded with people — old fishermen, decrepit women, quantities of children and young women, and some smart young men in white ducks and flannels.

I hold that in many ways Naples is the most

characteristic, the most Italian, of all Italy's cities. It is the most exaggeratedly Italian of them all. *L'Italie au grand complet*. It is there you see the bluest of blue skies, the yellowest of yellow houses, where you hear Italian talk at its most garrulous, Italian smells at their most pungent, and Italian song at its most nasal sentimental pitch, those squalling, pathetic, imploring, slightly flat love songs, the best of all love songs, because they express real love without any nonsense, plain love, unendurable, excruciating love.

"Excruciating" is the word. It is the love Catullus sings of in one of the shortest of poems:—

"Odi et amo, quave id faciam fortasse requiris
Nescio sed fieri sentio et excrucior."

I hate and I love; and if you want to know how that can be, I can't tell you, but I feel it, and I am excruciated — that is to say, I am in agony.

I imagine Catullus living at Naples and sailing on the bay in his yacht (*phaselus ille*) and going

out to dinner and drinking too much wine, and being witty and sometimes insolent to important people such as Julius Cæsar, and squalling love songs, bitter-sweet, desperate, passionate songs, in the gardens of his Lesbia, whose real name was Clodia.

She was the wife of a politician called, I think, Metellus Celer, and the professors say she was very, very bad. I don't trust the professors. I don't believe they know what the Romans, and especially the she-Romans, were like. I distrust their knowledge. But I trust Catullus's verse, and from that it is evident that he was very much in love, indeed, and very unhappy. Wretched Catullus, as he calls himself. And she, Lesbia, did n't care a rap. And in his misery he calls her hard names, which were probably well deserved. The note you hear in his poetry is the same you get in certain Neapolitan songs you hear in the street. You can get them on the gramophone, sung by Anselmi.

“At Florence,” according to an Italian saying, “you think; at Rome, you pray; at Venice, you love; at Naples, you look.” There is plenty to look at, especially in the evening, when Vesuvius turns rosy and transparent and the sea becomes phosphorescent; and plenty even in the daytime, when you watch

“The blue Mediterranean where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
Beside a pumice isle in Baïæ’s bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave’s intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers.”

The poets do hit it sometimes. And that is an exact description of Capri. It quivers in the wave’s intenser day. As you drive along to Posilippo, the hills of Sorrento seem like phantoms; the vegetation on the hill is gorgeously luxuriant and green; you pass donkey carts laden with bright-coloured fruits; the driver carries a huge yellow or green parasol; every now and then somebody shouts; trams whistle by. It is

hot, swelteringly hot, but freshness comes from the sea. Vesuvius is dormant, but crowned by a little cloud which pretends to be an eruption and is n't.

You are gluttled with sunshine and beauty and heat and colour. This is Italy, the quintessence of Italy, a panorama of azure, and sun, and dust. To-day, in any case, there is nothing disappointing about it — and I wish I were going to bathe in the reaches near Posilippo, and to sail in a boat at night and listen to the squealing, love-sick Neapolitan songsters.

When I get back to the ship, the passengers are all looking on at the boys diving for pennies, and carefully distinguishing between copper and silver, under the sea; till at last we leave behind the noise, the chatter, and the importunate vendors who want to sell you opera-glasses for almost nothing, and steam past Vesuvius, Sorrento, and Capri, away into the blue Mediterranean. *Addio, Napoli.*

Port Said: July 3

WE call for the mails at Taranto and then nothing happens till we get to Port Said — except that the stewards who had never been to sea before have recovered from seasickness, and the passengers are all well enough now to organise games and competitions in order to break the monotony, or to mar the peace (whichever you like), of the voyage.

At Port Said we coal. Black men do it, singing the whole time. When one has seen the black men coal at Port Said one realizes how the Egyptian pyramids were built. I don't mean how the engineering was done, but the kind of way in which the people who had to make bricks without straw set about it; for in the East nothing changes.

Conjurers and fortune-tellers come on board. I have my fortune told. I am amazed by the accurate description of my character and the

probability of the foretold fortune, until a friend of mine has his fortune told, and on comparing notes, we find the man told us word for word the same thing about our characteristics and fortune, past, present, and future. On reflection, I see that the way to tell people's character is to have one list of characteristics and to use it for every one without the slightest variation. It is bound to succeed. For instance, supposing Falstaff and Hamlet had their fortunes told by this Nubian, I imagine he would have told Hamlet's character as follows (I assume Hamlet and Falstaff to be on board *incognito*): —

You are not so fortunate as you seem. You have a great deal of sense, but more sense than knowledge. You can give admirable advice to other people. Your judgment is excellent as regards others, but bad as regards yourself. You never take your own good advice. You are fond of your friends. You prefer talk to action. You suffer from indecision. You are fond of the

stage. You are susceptible to female beauty. You are witty, amiable, and well educated, but you have a weakness for coarse jokes. You are superstitious and believe in ghosts. You can make people laugh; you often pretend to be more foolish than you are. At other times you will surprise people by your power of apt repartee. Your bane will be an inclination to fat which will hamper you in fighting. You are unsuccessful as a soldier, but unrivalled as a companion and philosopher. You will mix in high society, and have friends at Court. You will come off badly in personal encounter, and your final enemy will be a king."

Now, imagine him saying exactly the same thing to Falstaff. Does n't it fit him just as well? Can't you imagine Falstaff saying, "He has hit me off to a T," and Hamlet murmuring, "My prophetic soul"? In fact, I believe the profession of a fortune-teller, after that of a hair-specialist, to be the finest profession in the world, and

the easiest. In the first place it is almost impossible to prevent the patient from telling you the whole of his past and present of his own accord; and even if he does n't do this, a little deft cross-examination involved in a mass of vague generalization will extract a good deal.

This particular Nubian in the course of the process asked me my age, my profession, whether I was married, what my financial prospects were, and whether I had any children. However, I refused to answer questions; but I very nearly did once or twice, so insinuatingly were the questions put. I further tested the process by having my fortune and character told by a second seer, and he said exactly the same things as the first had said, and I afterwards found out that he also had said exactly the same thing to some one else.

The Red Sea : in July

THE first day you say it is pleasant. The second day you say the stories about the heat you have heard are gross exaggerations. The third day you feel the heat; and the fourth you realize that you are morning, noon, and night in a Turkish bath that has n't got a cooling-room. And yet the energetic played cricket and quoits. .

One morning (quite early in the morning) a tragedy happened. One of the stokers, a Maltee, went mad, owing to the heat, and jumped overboard. The steamer stopped, but nothing could be done. The sea is full of sharks.

The air is full of little particles of dust which makes your hair gritty. The best way to spend one's time is, I think, to remain obstinately motionless in a chair, dressed in the lightest of clothes, and to read novels, stories which engage without unduly straining the attention.

How grateful one is on such occasions to

the authors who have written books of that kind!

Somebody once said that there were books which it is a positive pleasure to read. To my mind the most precious of all books are those which seem to do the work for you. You don't have to bother; you are not aware that you are reading. Nobody could say this of the works of George Meredith or of Henry James. You may be interested, delighted, and moved, but you know you are reading.

Anthony Trollope and William de Morgan do the work for me, personally; so do Victor Hugo, George Sand, Count Tolstoy, and Rudyard Kipling.

Then there are books which one can't stop reading. To this class belong, in my case, the works of Dumas: "Monte Cristo," "La Reine Margot," and the many volumes which tell of the Musketeers.

"Monte Cristo" is the only book which for

me has ever annihilated time, space, and place, and everything else.

I read it at school at Eton, on a whole school-day. At three you had to go into school, which lasted till four. I began reading, or rather flew back to my book, as soon as luncheon was over, about half past two. I had just got to the part where Dantès is escaping from the Château d'If. I sat reading in a small room in my tutor's house. A quarter to three struck; three struck; Dumas silenced those bells, whose sound your whole unconscious self, as a rule, automatically obeyed. You could n't forget that sound if you wanted to, any more than a soldier forgets the bugle-calls that mark the routine of the day, or the sailor forgets the boatswain's whistle. The sound is in his flesh and bones as well as in his ears. Nature responds to it automatically, unconsciously.

But the sound of the clock striking three escaped me; and the clanging echoes of the school

clock chiming the quarters struck in vain for me through my open window on that June afternoon: and a quarter past three, half past three, and quarter to four. I may have heard, but I heeded not; my mind was far away. Now to shirk school altogether was an unheard-of thing. You could do it in the early morning and say you were ill, and "stay out" under the protection of the matron, who always certified that you were ill. (Who knows? it might be measles!) But if you shirked afternoon school, it meant probably writing out four books of "Paradise Lost." A little time after the quarter, the boys' maid came into my room and asked me whatever I was doing. I was brought back from the Château d'If, and my heart stopped still. I raced downstairs, across the street to the schoolyard, up the wooden stairs into the old Upper School, where beneath the busts of famous old Etonians, our little lessons dribbled on. I found school just over, and oh! miracle of miracles!

my absence had n't been noticed! In every division there was a boy called the *Præpostor* whose duty it was to see that every boy was present at chapel and in school (that is to say, in the various classrooms). The office was held for a week by every boy in the division, in turn. If you were absent, he had to find out whether it was due to certified illness or whether you had any other reasonable excuse. If not, your name went in to the Head Master. He had n't noticed my absence, nor had the master, and I walked away with the other boys as though I had been there all the time instead of at the Château d'If. I sometimes think that perhaps the spirit of Dumas impersonated me during that hour in Upper School, so that my rapture in reading of Dantès's escape for the first time might be complete, perfect, and uninterrupted. If Dumas could make one forget the chimes of the school clock at Eton, he could make one forget anything.

Another book which has (in addition to many other glorious qualities such as poetry, pathos, and passion) the same riveting power is, to my mind (if you skip the historical dissertations), Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables." Mr. Basil Thomson says it is the favourite book of the convicts in Dartmoor Prison, and that they call it "Less Miserable." It is a favourite book among the Russian peasants also — among those who read and write. So is, as a matter of fact, "Monte Cristo." Most literary critics say the latter part of "Monte Cristo" is a pity. Not so the Russian peasant, and not I. The proof is in the reading. Whoever heard of anybody not finishing "Monte Cristo," and stopping halfway, bored?

In reading what Mr. Basil Thomson says of the books liked and the books disliked by the prisoners in Dartmoor Prison, I was startlingly reminded of what I had heard and seen myself of the literary taste of the Russian peasants.

They both dislike books which are "full of

lies" (including many excellent modern stories). "Monte Cristo" has the seal of romantic truth. I met a man in a steamer later on in my journey who said that "Monte Cristo" was the best book in print. I agree.

In the Red Sea it was almost too hot to read, and I murmured to myself those lines from H. Belloc's epic, "The Modern Traveller": —

"O Africa, mysterious land,
Surrounded by a lot of sand —
Far land of Ophir, mined of old
By lordly Solomon for gold,
Who sailing southward to Perim,
Took all the gold away with him,
And left a lot of holes:
Vacuities which bring despair
To those confiding souls,
Who find that they have bought a share
In desolate horizons where
The Desert, terrible and bare,
Interminably rolls."

Perim we passed in the night, and then there suddenly came a moment when it got cooler.

We had turned a corner and the breeze began to blow. A hot breeze, but a breeze. And it's something even to get a hot breeze after four days and four nights in a Turkish bath.

The Gulf of Aden: July

EVERYBODY up to now has been vaguely discussing what kind of monsoon it would be. The most dismal prophecies were made. We were told it would be very rough, very hot, and very wet. As it turns out, it is not rough, not wet, but still hot: steamy and damp, that is to say.

I now feel as if I had been all my life on board. The passengers, the officers, and crew seem to be the only people in my universe; the rest are shadows and dreams. There are not many passengers on board. People fight shy of the Red Sea and the monsoon in July. I think they are wrong. There are just enough people for company and not too many for comfort. There is a pleasant variety of passengers; a few Australians, two Germans, a Frenchman and his wife, an Irishman, — once a mining expert and now a professional painter who paints bold and capable landscapes in oil, full of colour and light, —

a Scotch family, a High Commissioner (whatever that may be), an American lady singer, a missionary, and two young North-Country Englishmen.

If one travels for over a month on a liner, one's fellow passengers sometimes may become something more than what Bourget calls *profils perdus*: meaning the chance acquaintanceships of the *table d'hôte* and the railway train. In a steamer one can, if one chooses, get to know people really well.

Every evening a small crowd play whisky poker for cocktails; after dinner there is a good deal of bridge; sometimes some music. But from ship's music, as a rule, one can "withdraw one's attention" without difficulty.

I am told a good deal about Australia and the Australians by people who have been backwards and forwards. They agree to its being a splendid country, full of openings for the emigrant. "In Australia," some one tells me, "peo-

ple don't ask you for references. If you ask for a job they give it you, and as long as you show you can do it, they let you do it, and as soon as you show signs of not being able to do it, they fire you out."

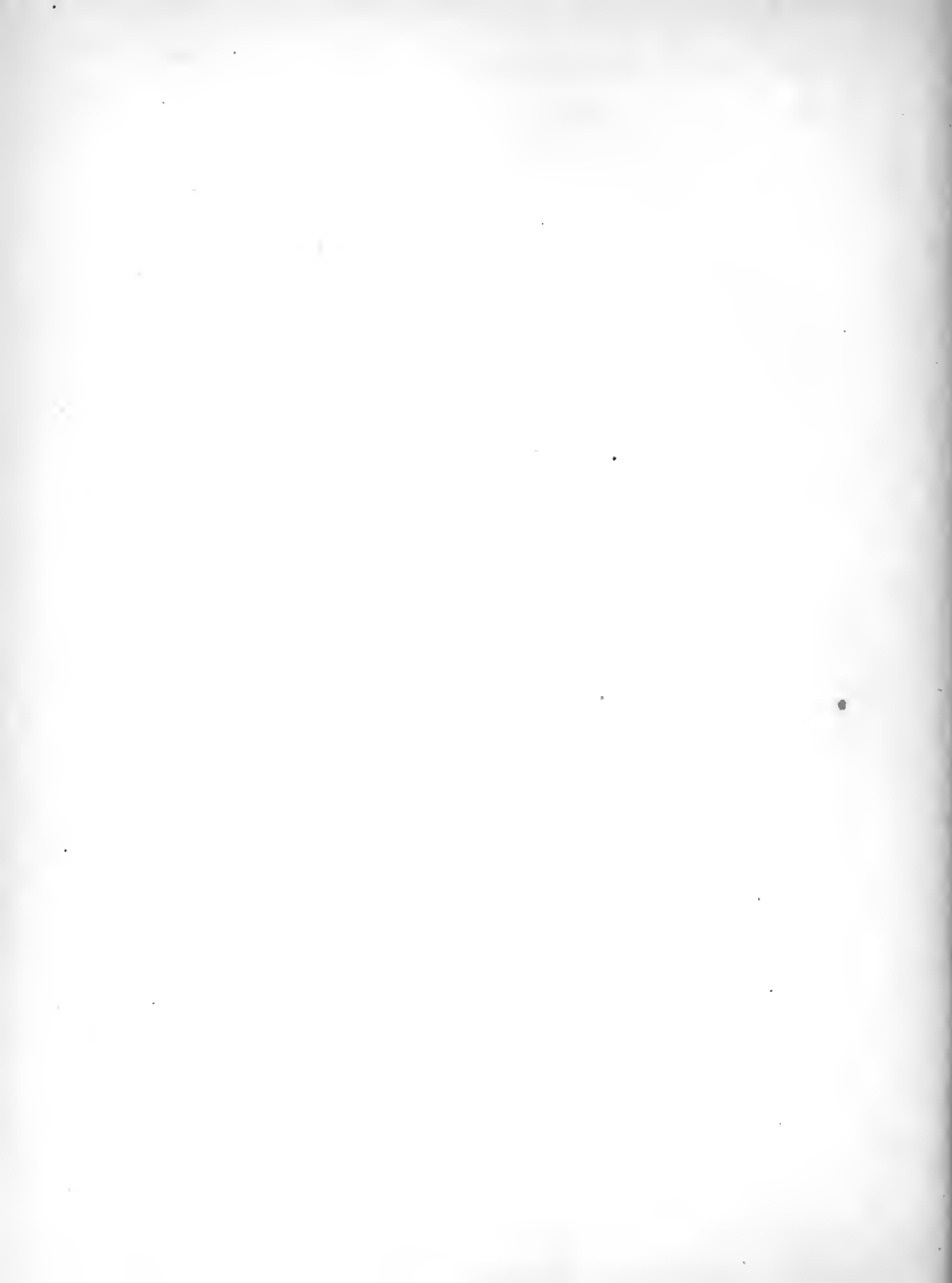
That is, indeed, a different system from what obtains in the mother country, where references are regarded with awe, and where a thousand small side issues often contribute not only to a square peg remaining in a round hole, but to an utterly hopeless peg remaining in any kind of hole.

One also hears that the Australians (*a*) resent criticism on anything Australian; (*b*) are very critical of what they see in other countries.

What irritates the Australians, no doubt, and what justly irritates them, is when globe-trotters rush round the country in a few days and then write a book of critical impressions. In England (and in America, I should think) the people have got over being irritated by that particular



FROM SHIP'S MUSIC, AS A RULE, ONE CAN WITHDRAW ONE'S
ATTENTION WITHOUT DIFFICULTY



form of literature. They don't care. If a visitor, after spending a fortnight in England, writes a book called "The Rotten English," or "Those Damned English," or the "God-forsaken Country," we don't much care. And as for criticism, if it be well founded and well expressed, it will be certain to obtain a wide popularity in England. Witness Mr. Collier's "England and the English." Personally there is nothing I enjoy reading more than the critical impressions of my own country written by an intelligent foreigner. It opens the window on all sorts of shut-up points of view, and it calls one's attention to what one had never noticed because it was too obvious; because we ourselves are in it.

But the Australians appear to be sensitive to the criticism of the foreigner, even when it is just and well founded. My very slender experience has convinced me that they are often unduly critical with regard to the objects of interest in other countries. One day, on board, one of

the Australians expressed disappointment and censure with regard to London architecture. I thought at first he meant the new public offices; but not at all; he meant Westminster Abbey, which compared unfavourably with the cathedral in Adelaide.

I was inclined to think this critical point of view which was attributed to the colonials was perhaps imaginary, or in any case exaggerated. It certainly is exaggerated; it is n't imaginary.

Here, for instance, are some extracts taken from a book written by A. W. Rutherford, of New Zealand, on Europe. I quote them from a review which appeared in an Australian review, "The Bookfellow." Mr. Rutherford, says the reviewer, was disappointed with Paris; "the streets are not equal to those of any of our cities; the respectable restaurants are mean, shabby affairs; the swell restaurants are the haunts of gilded vice and supported by vice; the Seine, like the Thames within its city boundary, is

just a dirty ditch — neither of them to be compared with the Waikato. Most Parisians look dowdy. Our Maoris could teach the French a lesson in politeness. Meat is not safe in France. . . . Much of the wine is vile; no colonial could possibly drink it; the cheap wines of France are deadly rubbish.”

Of the tombs in Westminster Abbey he says they are dirty, untidy, inartistic; “some of them look like great cooking ranges.”

He is disappointed in Venice, but he gives a clear reason for his disappointment in the gondola. “I had imagined the latter a frivolous, giddy thing, gaily painted, and the gondoliers clothed as in the play of that name. The gondoliers are just plain sailormen, in their work-a-day clothes.”

That explains everything. Everything, as I said about Naples, depends on what you expect, on your standard. If you expect a gondola to be gilded and giddy and it turns out to be black,

you are disappointed. If you expect the Seine and the Thames to be vast rivers, outside their cities and not in them, you are disappointed. What such authors never seem to bother about is whether their standard is likely to be indorsed by the rest of the human race or not. Their standard may be an excellent one for some things. The things which everybody else in the world would acknowledge to be good. For instance, in this case, the manners of the Maoris. The Maoris are the most courteous and chivalrous race in the world. But if they can teach manners to the French, there are many people in the colonies who would benefit by a lesson from them also. Another thing which the author of this book does not seem to realize is that there are many people who prefer a gondolier should look like a sailor, which he is, than like a singer in operetta. They prefer him to be dressed in his ordinary work-a-day clothes. They think it not only more appropriate to his task, but more pic-

turesque. They think a man who is dressed in the clothes which befit his profession will look more dignified than a man who is dressed up as for a pageant.

The reviewer ends by saying, "Mr. Rutherford is a representative New Zealander, and in many ways a typical New Zealander. His interesting book is worth reading. It is compounded of keen observation, shrewd judgment, parish prejudice, and pure ignorance . . . in its narrowness and in its depth, its arrogance and its enlightenment, it comments upon New Zealand as effectively as upon Europe; it shows us why Dominion standards are condemned in Britain, sometimes justly, and it may suggest to British readers how the Dominions feel in regard to the comments of hasty British tourists with frequently less ability than Mr. Rutherford displays."

Yes, it does suggest that. It also suggests to one to hope that free trade and liberty may be

maintained in the matter. Let the colonial say exactly what he thinks about Europe, but let the European say exactly what he thinks about the colonies, and then neither side can have a grievance. But when the colonial complains of the hasty and narrow judgment of the European, let him have a thought for the possible beam in his own eye.

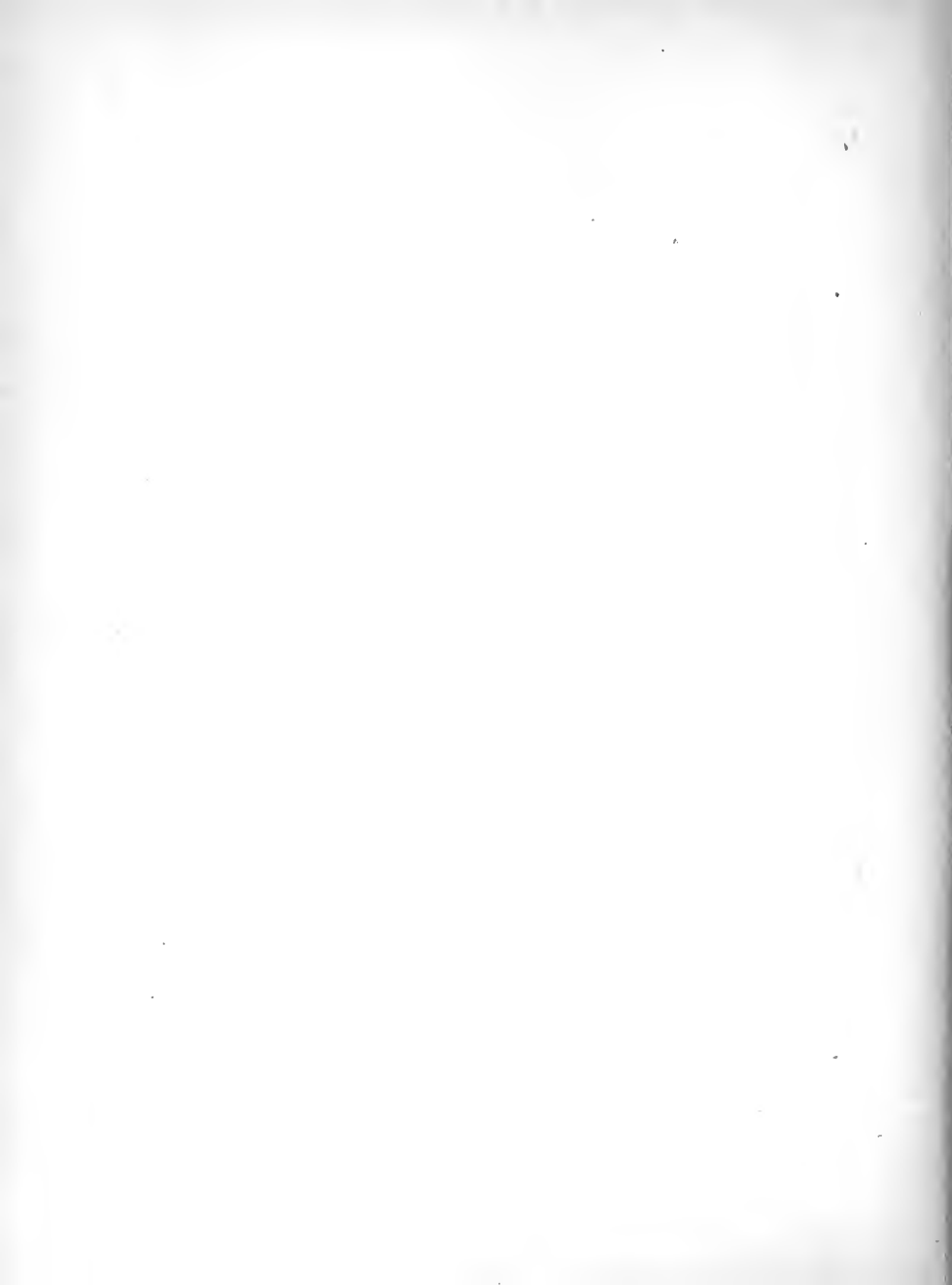
Another time, on board, another Australian complained that the works of G. K. Chesterton were bosh. "Thank God," he added, "he's not an Australian."

But fancy if G. K. Chesterton had been an Australian. One wonders what would have been the effect on his figure, his style, and his philosophy. Instead of his romantic, adventurous optimism, would his genius have been sultry, pessimistic, and rebellious?

I think he would have written gigantic epics on the Blue Mountains, the Bush, and gum-trees; wild romances about bush-rangers, and



IF G. K. CHESTERTON HAD BEEN AN AUSTRALIAN



beach-combers, and swinging songs about Botany Bay.

I can imagine G. K. Chesterton, looking lean and spare, riding a horse bareback. One of his qualities would have certainly developed in the same way, had he been born and bred over the sea, and that is his geniality, his large, hospitable nature, his belief in goodness; for hospitality and friendliness grow if anything quicker on Australian and colonial soil than they do in England.

Here is a fragment of verse supposed to be written by G. K. Chesterton, had he been born and bred in the country which Adam Lindsay Gordon sang: —

"The Melbourne Cup," or "Hippodromania"

The crowd came out of the Eastern lands
To see the Melbourne Cup,
Like Titans under tiger skies
They were as simple as surprise
And pleased as a bulldog pup.

Beyond the twisted gum-trees
They suddenly ceased to swarm;
Like statues the wild crowd stood still,
Like soldiers little children drill,
And silence came upon the hill
More loud than a thunderstorm.

And the bell rang a little,
And the riders were up at the post,
Full of strange fire the racers strip
And ramp and rock and boil and skip
Each like an angel in a ship
That charges the tall white coast.

The emerald course was a course indeed,
Between that crowd of men.
And every steed became a steed.
"Say when, old boy, say when!"

The flag is lowered, they're off! They come!
Like clouds on a roaring sky.
Jim Whiffler swirls his whip away
And the tall grey horse goes by.

His face is like a newspaper
That many men take in;
The colours of his sleeve are mixed
Like cocktails made with gin.

Now Strop falls back, they're neck and neck,
Now Davis, Whiffler, ride;
Jim Whiffler with his brainless face
Is spun and swirled aside.

Jim Whiffler's lost! but as he fails
He screams into the din,
The mare has still more heart to lose
Than you have heart to win.

And Whiffler sits high in the saddle,
A broken-hearted jockey;
And our Jim Whiffler, robbed of fame,
Singed by the bookmakers with blame,
Cries out, "I'll change my trade and name
And take to playing hockey."

The Indian Ocean: during the Monsoon

IT'S not at all like the Indian Ocean of which Kipling sings, "so soft, so something, so blooming blue." It is grey; there's a swell, and it's muggy. But at night you can see the Southern Cross, and that's an excitement.

How did Dante know there was such a thing as the Southern Cross? He certainly did know it, because when he emerged from hell, somewhere near the South Pole, he says he looked at the polar sky and saw four stars which had never been seen before save by the first people — whoever they were (the inhabitants of Paradise?) —

"All' altro polo, e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai fuor che alla prima gente."

I dare say, and I believe some commentators do say, that his meaning was allegorical, and that by the four stars he meant Woman's Suffrage, or the battle of Waterloo. I take leave to differ. I'm sure he meant the Southern Cross.

Perhaps it is in Herodotus, whose geography, long suspected of being fantastic, is proved to be more and more accurate. For instance, Herodotus said the source of the Nile was in the Silver Mountain. This was pooh-poohed for centuries, until the discovery of Mount Ruwenzori proved that Herodotus was perfectly right.

Dante was a great traveller, and the greatest pen impressionist who ever wrote. He describes a landscape in a line so that it stays with you forever. He uses the smallest possible number of words, hardly any adjectives, and the picture leaps up before you, immortal and unforgettable.

Who can do this among the moderns? Keats could sometimes. Tennyson gives you English landscape. If you read "In Memoriam" you have lived a year in the English country and seen the march of the English seasons. Crabbe can do it. Who reads Crabbe? Nobody. And yet he is a wonderful poet, as realistic as Tolstoy and Arnold Bennett, as poignant as Gorky.

Byron called him the best painter of nature. (And Byron was a good judge.) He can give you a landscape in a line. For instance: —

“And on the ocean slept th’ unanchored fleet.”

He writes about the poor as they are, without sentimentality, and without exaggeration; and as a painter of English landscape he still remains the best.

What has the poet Crabbe got to do with the Indian Ocean? Nothing. But it can do nobody any harm to be reminded of the poet Crabbe, although he was born in 1754 and died in 1832. He may not be read by the modern generation, but he is not forgotten. A Frenchman wrote a long and excellent book about him not long ago. He is safe in the Temple of Fame, which once you have entered you cannot leave. And this temple is like a wheel. It goes round and round, and sometimes some of its inmates are in the glare of the sun, and sometimes they are in the

shade, but they are there; and they never fall out. This is comforting. It also teaches us not to laugh at the taste of our fathers, because that taste which we despise may be the rage once more in the days of our grandchildren.

How we used to despise everything connected with the Early Victorian period. Now people have their rooms done up in Early Victorian style, and Early Victorian furniture is collected; rep sofas are precious, green tablecloths and antimacassars. They have passed the period of being like an out-of-date fashion plate; they have reached the hallowed moment of being picturesque and Old World. It is Late Victorian art that is now despised — William Morris and Burne-Jones. But they are safe in the temple, too, and a day will come when people will admire Burne-Jones's pictures and collect Morris designs as a great curiosity, and say, "This is a very fine specimen of 1880 chintz."

During this monsoon period I read more than

ever. I once asked a famous politician what he did on a sea voyage. He said, "The first day I am civil to my fellow passengers, and after that I read Scott's novels." I adopted this plan.

Ceylon : July

A LINE of palm trees over a tumultuous fringe of silver foam, which leaps up on a dull opal-green sea, is your first impression as you get near the island. When you come into harbour, a quantity of narrow black boats swarm round the steamer. Then the tug comes alongside, and after waiting in it till it is no longer worth while to go on shore in a boat, I finally, in a burst of impatience, get into a boat and am rowed ashore. No sooner am I in the boat than the tug starts. However, the four black men in my boat pull hard and we reach the pier almost at the same time as the tug.

The first thing to do is to take a rickshaw. It is fine, but fortunately cloudy; the sun is hidden. In spite of this, it is hot, very hot. The streets are made of red sand, the houses of Venetian red stone. You pass palm trees, and trees which look like acacias, only they have mingled

with the intense green of their foliage a quantity of scarlet flowers. I go scudding along the street to the Galleface Hotel. You pass babus in white European clothes, and frail black Cingalese dressed in diaphanous silks, and Anglo-Indians in pith helmets. The world of Kipling is revealed to one in a trice. A long drive along the sea leads to the hotel. This is the fashionable esplanade of Ceylon. Carriages pass up and down full of wealthy natives. The sea throws up a huge long wash of booming surf. The hotel is a large white building, like the section of an exhibition. The bedrooms are high wooden cubicles. As soon as you arrive a tailor springs from somewhere and asks you if you want any clothes — thin clothes — made in the night. I don't think I do. As soon as I have got a room and disposed of my luggage, I take a rickshaw and drive through the native part of the town. It becomes more and more like Kipling. You pass little bullocks, and natives bathing and

washing clothes in a pool; shops full of fruit; natives squatting, natives talking, natives smoking. You hear all manner of cries, and you smell the smell of the East.

I wander about until it is dark and then come back to dinner. The tailor appears again. I don't want any clothes: but it is no use, one has to order them, so importunate is he. He measures me and promises to have the complete suit ready by the next morning at 6.30.

It is when you are dressed for dinner and you come down into the large high dining-room, full of electric fans, that you realize that it is impossible to be cool. It is an absorbing, annihilating damp heat that saps your very being.

The first thing to do is to eat a mango. Will it be as good as you are told it is? Yes, it is better. At first you think it is just an ordinary apricot, and then you think it is a banana; no, fresher; a peach, a strawberry, and then a delicious, sharp, fresh, aromatic after-taste comes;

slightly tinged with turpentine, but not bitter. Then you get all the tastes at once, and you know that the mango is like nothing else but its own incomparable self.

It has all these different tastes at once, simultaneously. In this it resembles the beatific vision as told of by St. Thomas Aquinas. The point of the beatific vision, says St. Thomas, is *its infinite variety*. So that those who enjoy it have at the same time the feeling that they are looking at a perfect landscape, hearing the sweetest music, bathing in a cold stream on a hot day, reaching the top of a mountain, galloping on grass on a horse that is n't running away, floating over tree-tops in a balloon, reading very good verse, eating toasted cheese, drinking a really good cocktail — and any other nice thing you can think of, *all at once*. The point, therefore, of the taste of the mango is its infinite variety. It was probably mangoes which grew in Eden on the Tree of Knowledge, only I expect

they had a different kind of skin then, and were without that cumbersome and obstinate kernel, which makes them so very difficult to eat.

There are a good many people at dinner — Englishmen and Englishwomen. Their faces are washed absolutely chalk-white by the heat, as if every drop of blood had been drained from them. That is what comes from living in such a climate. One thinks of Kipling once more. The room seems to be full of his characters. There is Mrs. Hawksbee; I recognised her at once. There is Otis Yeere and Pluffles, and Churton and Reggie Burke, and Pack, and I believe that conjuror in the verandah is Strickland in disguise. He comes nearer and does the mango trick, and then begins to charm a snake; but we all refuse to see the snake charmed, charm he never so wisely, having a horror of snakes.

It gets hotter and hotter; one feels one's bones melting.

The next morning punctually at 6.30 the

tailor arrives with the suit of clothes finished, as he promised, and by eight we have to be on board the steamer.

To-day the sun is shining with all his might, and one realizes that if one had stayed a few hours longer in this beautiful island, it would have entailed either buying a pith helmet or getting a sunstroke.

The harbour is a lovely sight in the early morning. Church parties from a British man-of-war are on their way to church. The sea is like an emerald to-day. The little narrow native boats, full of gorgeous-coloured fruits, are slipping about round the liner. I am sorry to leave Ceylon.

From Colombo to Fremantle: July

THE Indian Ocean once more. The weather now is pleasant, but it is still very hot. We are in the doldrums. The word "doldrums" conjures up visions of adventure, of pirates, of Spanish galleons, of frigates fighting privateers, and of Marryat's characters.

I don't believe a man who is not a sailor can write a really good book about the sea. The knowledge involved is so intimate, and requires years of soaking in. There are, of course, exceptions. Shakespeare has led some people to believe that, besides being a lawyer, a Lord Chancellor, and a woman, he was also a sailor. Rudyard Kipling, I should say, could deceive the elect, and surely "Captains Courageous" is one of the very best sea-stories ever written. "Treasure Island" is an adventure book, and a masterpiece, but then it really deals very little with the sea. Turn to Marryat: what a difference there

is between him and the amateur sea-writer! You feel that the sea is his whole life; he lays bare the very pulse of the machine of sea-life. I wish some of the great novelists had spent their early years on a training-ship. I wonder what would have been the result had this been the fate of George Meredith, for instance. I think it would have made his style more lucid; but perhaps not. Can you imagine a ship of whom the skipper was George Meredith, the first mate Henry James, the second mate Thomas Hardy, the purser Bernard Shaw, the ship's cook G. K. Chesterton, and the steward Max Beerbohm? I can imagine the following conversation taking place: —

Scene : Deck of a Ship in the Indian Ocean

CAPTAIN MEREDITH (*to First Mate James*): I think we had better fiddle harmonics on the strings of the mainsail.

FIRST MATE JAMES: I mentioned to you, sir, the last time that we somewhat infelicitously met, that

I intended to appeal, with a dozen differential precautions, to another and probably more closely qualified meteorologic authority on the subject of the Second Mate's whimsical, wanton, perhaps fortunate but so far unconfirmed and unqualified change of course, and indeed, if I may venture without presumption, and at the risk of incurring the suspicion of undue parenthesis, and of an almost tremulous desire to say everything, I would, and indeed I had done so already, but for a fugitive shade of displeasure on your eyebrows, I would adumbrate the shadow of a surmise, that, faced as we are —

CAPTAIN MEREDITH (*impatiently*): The young who fear to enter the forest of advice do so at the cost of losing their way in the lane that knows no ending.

(*Enter Ship's Cook Chesterton*)

COOK CHESTERTON: The Purser complains of the pea-soup. He says it is not fit for a dog. It is true. It is not fit for a dog, but the whole soul and glory of this fast and frantic life is to eat and to enjoy food that a dog rejects. He does n't see that it is the dog who is wrong.

PURSER SHAW: I never said that the dog was wrong in his choice of food. I have no objection to eating dog biscuit; what I do object to is eating dog soup. . . . What I do object to is eating a soup which professes to be made of vegetables and in reality is made of dog. I see no moral objection to cannibalism. I have no moral objection to eating shoulder of boatswain; but I do object to the old-fashioned superstition of believing that soup is still made of fresh peas when *it is n't*. That soup was made of old flesh. If you don't believe me, ask the steward. Here, Steward.

(Enter Steward Beerbohm)

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: Our battle is ever between undeserved rewards and stolen fruits. What say you, Steward?

STEWARD BEERBOHM: Let us forget these bickerings and turn ourselves lightly to the thought of home, of Piccadilly, of the artificial haunts and the gaudy hostels, where indifferent cooks and careless waiters proffer inartistically prepared *mets* to the blasé, the faded and the jaded and the new rich, who partake of it with feigned satisfaction, and pay for it with a faint but exquisite pleasure in knowing that the bill is more than they can afford.

PURSER SHAW: Your Piccadilly is here and now. I venture to submit that the Steward is an incurable romantic. Now romance in food is preposterous.

COOK CHESTERTON: There is nothing so romantic as food, nothing so poetic as roast beef, nothing so fantastic as plum-pudding, nothing so lyrical as eggs and bacon, nothing in cant modern sense so artistic as a mutton chop, nothing so dreamy as toasted cheese.

PURSER SHAW: Exactly. You are still infected with the poison of your nurseries and the sentiment of Christmas. I have exploded Christmas. I have annihilated the nursery.

STEWARD BEERBOHM: I think Christmas very quaint and charming, and a nursery, conducted according to the principles of the early years of Victoria the First, a place of dainty manners and delicate precepts and wistful rhymes. I would not forget them for anything.

FIRST MATE JAMES: The word nursery, now you speak it, throws a curious thrill through the lining, so to speak, of the psychological situation. We

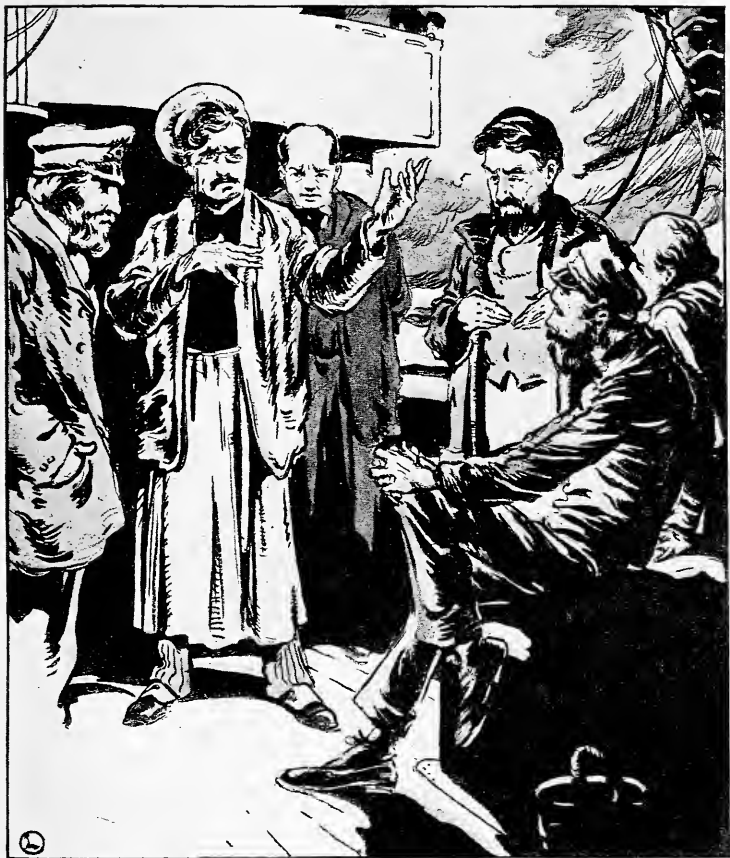
might, in fact, in such a case even follow the steward into another and no less refined a speculation, the question of whether the nursery, the sanest seat of moral ethics, might not, after all, be the high final if somewhat narrow circle of all ultimate — that is to say —

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: To have the sense of the eternal in the nursery is nothing. To have had it is the beginning of wisdom. But let us rather put off discussion of the theme, until round the mahogany we can broach a bottle of the Old Widow, nay rather, Hermitage — ah! that was a great wine —

STEWARD BEERBOHM: The suggestion of asceticism in the name, blent with the sensuality of the thing, heightens its charm. Who would not be a hermit, and dwell in one of those rococo palacules built for weary monarchs in an age of scepticism, flute-playing, and minuets?

(Enter Second Mate Hardy)

SECOND MATE HARDY: The spirit of the years is looking down upon our ship with an ironical smile. O Wessex, Wessex! Would that I could see Stonehenge and a large red moon rising over the plain.



THERE IS NOTHING SO ROMANTIC AS FOOD

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: I am glad to be away from the island of chills and the *informes hiemes*.

PURSER SHAW: Sir, with all due respect, I cannot allow this digression to continue. No Englishman can talk consecutively for more than two minutes on the same subject.

COOK CHESTERTON: That is why the Irish have conquered England.

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: Observe the Southern Cross, if indeed that be the Southern Cross, hanging like a jeweled hilt in the spherul blue —

STEWARD BEERBOHM: Pretty little trinket! Is it a brooch or an aigrette? Methinks a device of Cartier —

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: Those stars are pebbles on the silvery wheel-course of the chariot of the moon.

SECOND MATE HARDY: Pitiless, inflexible stars, thousands and thousands of millions of miles away.

PURSER SHAW: Don't you believe it. That's one of the lies men of science tell us.

COOK CHESTERTON: It does n't matter if the stars are twenty miles off, or twenty millions of miles off. The point about the stars is that they are stars.

(Enter an Ordinary Seaman)

ORDINARY SEAMAN: Please, sir, the ship is sinking.

SECOND MATE HARDY: I knew it! O Irony!

PURSER SHAW: Then we shall have to eat roast boatswain after all.

FIRST MATE JAMES: If I might hazard a suggestion, without of course trying to grasp any impertinent or rather importunate shadow of a scheme —

ORDINARY SEAMAN: The cabin boy has escaped in the galley.

CAPTAIN MEREDITH: O brave!

STEWARD BEERBOHM: Ouf!

(The ship sinks with all hands.)

.
To-night (when is it? I have lost count of time,

but I know it is still July) one of the officers told me a yarn. It was his own ghost story, and it was ultimately spoiled for him, just as happened in the case of Kipling, when he heard phantom billiard players playing all night and found out the next day that the noise was caused by a rat and a loose window-sash. This is the story; but I shall spoil it in the telling because to tell a sea-yarn you must be a sailor.

The ship was sailing somewhere near the Cape of Good Hope. It was dirty weather and the sailor who was on watch came and reported to the officer that there was a ghost in the sea, for'ard.

The officer sent him away, but he returned almost immediately and reported that the ghost was still there.

The officer said rude things, and added that he had better go aloft and watch the ghost from there. Another man was sent to replace the craven, and all was calm for a while, when sud-

denly this second sailor came back, pale with fear, and said that a woman was rising through the mist from the sea. Some one else was sent to replace this man, and the ghost had such an effect upon him that he fell down and broke his leg. Then the captain came on deck and the officer reported the state of affairs to him. He went forward and came back saying, "It is a ghost." Then, being a religious man, he fetched a Bible and tried to exorcise the ghost by reading the Scripture.

While this was going on, the officer who told me the story went forward, and there, as plain as a pikestaff, in the murky mist, he saw a white woman slowly rise in the swell and then disappear. Paralysed with horror, he stood looking at the sea, and the woman rose once more; and then, his fear left him, and he realized that it was the figurehead of the ship which had got knocked off.

But I have spoiled that story. I have merely

told the bare facts; what you want is the whole thing; the dialogue, the details; the technical terms.

From Colombo to Fremantle is probably the most monotonous part of the voyage. The only object of interest is the albatross, but as nobody shot one, with a crossbow, no untoward events happened.

Fremantle : July

FREMANTLE is the least attractive of ports. You are not meant to stay there. You are meant to go on to Perth. Nevertheless, it was my first sight of an Australian city. It struck me as being in some ways rather like a Russian provincial town; this is not odd, because Russia is a country of colonists. What differentiates a Russian city from an Australian — and indeed from any other city — is the churches with their gilded spires and blue cupolas and their Byzantine shape.

At Fremantle the firemen went on shore — against orders. They drank to their hearts' content, and came back in a state of truculent inebriation, as did many of the steerage passengers. We left Fremantle in the evening. There was a strong wind blowing. Two little tugs were doing their best to pull us out of the narrow harbour. They could scarcely pull their own weight;

and then one of the hawsers broke. We drifted to port where alongside of the wharf some cargo steamers lay at anchor.

"Hullo!" said somebody; "we shall only just do it."

The passengers became interested.

Then it became evident that we were n't going just to do it; and we went — *crunch! crunch!* — into the steamers alongside the wharf, carrying away the wooden gear they had to put cattle in.

Then began a slow battle of the tugs against the wind; whenever we seemed to be moving to starboard, the wind brought us back again to the wharf. It looked at one moment as if we were going to be there all night. Two of the firemen were fighting forward. Then the wind dropped a little, our own engines began to work, and we steamed safely out of the harbour.

We did hardly any damage to the ship against which we crunched, except carrying away that wooden gear; but the moment any little incident

of that kind happens in a ship, it makes you realize instantly how disagreeable a real accident would be. These large ships look so helpless under such circumstances: and after all, when accidents happen, they happen, whether a ship is in harbour or in midocean, whether she is large or small: witness the Royal George and the Titanic.

Adelaide: July

WE reached Adelaide on a Saturday night, and on Sunday morning I went on shore and saw for the first time the dark-brown colouring, the scrub, and the gum-trees of Australia. It was supposed to be winter; but it was what we call in England early spring, because the almond trees were in full bloom. The atmosphere was dazzlingly clear but cold. The whole colour and nature of the place, with its dark evergreens, brown earth, luxuriant winter vegetation, and its blue and lilac hills in the distance, and its limpid sky, reminded me of the south of France in winter; but Australia has a peculiar atmosphere of its own which, if properly painted, ought to make the fortune of a painter. There are some very clever Australian painters.

Adelaide is called the "Garden City" of Australia. It deserves the name, for it looks like a garden even in winter. The hotels are good, the

streets spacious and wide boulevards, and there is the most beautifully situated steeplechase course I have ever seen. It being Sunday, everything was shut: this made occupation in the city less interesting than it might have been, and it was too cold to motor into the hills.

At Adelaide fourteen firemen left the ship forever. The trouble about firemen on the mail steamers that go to Australia is that they are white men. They cannot stand the heat of the tropics and they do not earn a living wage.

“Who,” as the chief engineer said to me, “would not be a fireman in the Red Sea in July, when the temperature is 120 in the shade? And who would not be a man who has to look after firemen?”

One cannot travel on a big liner without being amazed, or rather aghast, at the conditions under which the crew and the stewards live in the merchant service, and the terms under which the officers serve, so that one wonders how it happens

that any one goes to sea; and one is inclined almost to agree with Dr. Johnson's opinions on the subject.

"A ship," he said, "is worse than a gaol. There is in a gaol better air, better company, better conveniences of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life they are not fit to live on land."

"Then," said Boswell, "it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea."

"It would be cruel," said Johnson, "in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as, indeed, is generally the case with men when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

But what is wrong with the officer's life in the merchant service? it will be asked.

The answer is that he is miserably underpaid. In some cases he gets less than an able seaman gets in Australia. He has to buy linen, his uniform, many pairs of whites. His work is one of great responsibility. A captain when he has worked for twenty years gets no pension. Talk with any officer in the merchant service and his advice to any one who thinks of going to sea is, "Don't."

As to the men, a sailor's life in a liner is about the same as a sailor's life anywhere, but the accommodation of the stewards is miserable. The "glory-hole" where they sleep crowded together has an almost incredible insufficiency of space and air. And a first-class steward has to keep himself neat and clean: besides which he is extremely hard-worked.

Talking of the recent dock strike in London with one of the stewards, he told me they did n't want to come out in sympathy with the strikers, because they got absolutely nothing by it. They

were most of them made to come out on strike, with no prospect of any betterment in matters which concerned them.

I don't believe the stewards' accommodation in a ship is a bit better than it was forty years ago.

Melbourne: July

I PRACTICALLY only had a glimpse of Melbourne; a drive through the city, a visit to a newspaper office and to some of the shops, a walk through the park in the twilight, a dinner with a friend, and a drive in a taxi back to the harbour.

I was struck by the mildness of the climate; but I was told that up till then the weather had been very cold. I was struck here again by the softness and peculiar luminous quality of the atmosphere; by the size of the city, which seemed quite enormous; a handsome city, with regular streets, tall buildings, and a multitude of cars.

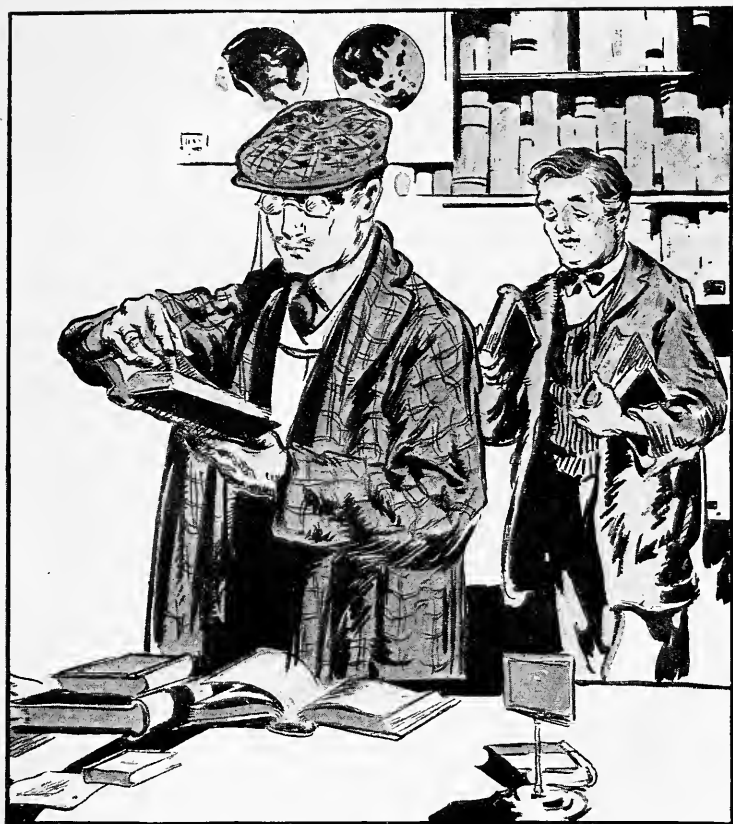
Sydney: August 2

WE entered the bay in the dawn — or rather before the dawn; it was very misty; we moved in a vague twilight of blue shadows. I got up to see the bay, but you could see nothing distinctly, nothing but mist and blue shadows; the whole thing very unearthly] and beautiful. I went back to my bunk, intending to get up again in half an hour's time, when it was lighter. But I went to sleep, and when I woke up again we were right against the wharf.

You could hear the bugles from a British man-of-war, the Drake. It was a brilliant, warm, delicious^r day.

I spent a whole day in the city of Sydney, exploring the stores, riding about aimlessly in the cars. I had luncheon at the Australian Hotel. The waiters were dressed as stewards, and, indeed, many of them are ex-stewards. I thought the food excellent. I visited two excellent bookstores.

When you go to a bookstore in London and ask for any book, you are told they have n't got it. Here in Sydney I found the men in the stores abnormally intelligent. You could even get different kinds of books written by the same author, which is a difficult feat anywhere. Most booksellers think that if a man writes a book on, say, poultry, it is preposterous to ask for a work of his on political economy or step-dancing. And yet it happens that many writers write books on different subjects — Andrew Lang, for instance. We received the sad news of the death of Andrew Lang at Fremantle. Andrew Lang is an author who spent the large capital of his wit, his learning, his wide sympathies, royally and generously without stint; he was a master of English prose, and some of the best pieces of prose he ever wrote were flung into leaders in the "Daily News." Those which were afterwards collected in a book called "Lost Leaders" make the most delightful reading. He wrote just as



IN SYDNEY I FOUND THE MEN IN THE BOOKSTORES ABNORMALLY
INTELLIGENT

well and just as wittily on street noises or mid-summer heat as on Homer, the Young Pretender, or Joan of Arc. He was profoundly unprovincial; he had a fine and rare quiet appreciation of French poetry; he could write ghost stories, fairy tales, doggerel; he was a supreme dialectician, an amusing parodist, a prince of letter-writers, as well as a poet;—perhaps he was above all things a poet. The following translation of Rufinus' verses to Rhodocleia, sending her a wreath, is a good example of his verse. He has turned an exquisite Greek poem into an exquisite English poem.

“Ah, Golden Eyes, to win you yet,
I bring mine April coronet.
The lovely blossoms of the spring
For you I weave, to you I bring
These roses with the lilies set,
The dewy dark-eyed violet,
Narcissus, and the wind-flower wet:
Wilt thou disdain mine offering?
Ah, Golden Eyes!

Crowned with thy lover's flowers, forget
The pride wherein thy heart is set,
For thou, like these or anything,
Hast but a moment of thy spring,
Thy spring, and then — the long regret!
Ah, Golden Eyes!"

To go back to Sydney and the stores. The trouble is I cannot remember either of their names. I had dinner at a restaurant called the Palace Hotel, and after dinner I visited the office of the Sydney "Herald," where I spent a very pleasant time. I had already been met by two interviewers in the morning, and they asked me whether I was going to write anything about Australia. I said No, that I had no intention of so doing, as I did not believe in writing seriously about a country where one does n't make a proper stay. Practically I saw nothing of Australia; but I suppose there is no harm in writing these notes — the mere rough impressions of a fugitive traveller.

Although I was only twelve hours in Sydney,

I had occasion to notice the hospitality of the people. What struck me also was the life and gaiety of the place.

The next morning, which was Saturday, I had to leave the liner, which had been my home for the last six weeks, and embark on the Maunganui for Wellington, whither I was bound.

The Maunganui, which belongs to the Union Steamship Company, is a new vessel, and quite extraordinarily comfortable. The voyage from Sydney to Wellington takes from Saturday to Wednesday, but sometimes if the weather is bad it takes longer.

As we steamed out of Sydney, I at last had a view of the famous bay, and it exceeded all my expectations: the colouring is so rich, the lines and shape of the coast are so nobly planned, and the sky and the sea are so intoxicatingly bright, fresh, and dazzling. I am sorry for people who are disappointed in Sydney.

On Board the Maunganui: August

THE ship is crowded with passengers. There is a very comfortable smoking-room on the upper deck. The ship is beautifully clean and new-looking. She is a new ship. She made her first voyage in February, 1912.

There are on board fifty "boys" who are going to Buenos Ayres. There are engineers. As for the rest of the passengers, there are many men, many women, and many children. The sea is unusually smooth — unusually, that is to say, for this part of the ocean, which I am told is generally rough.

I settle myself down to read O'Brien's "Life of Parnell," one of the best biographies in the English language.

I think a ship is the pleasantest place to read in in the world. First, you have the advantages of being indoors and out of doors at the same time, if you sit on a deck chair, or in a

smoking-room near an open door. Secondly, you are just sufficiently and not too much interrupted. You can pause and watch the passengers. You overhear scraps of talk. You engage yourself in desultory conversation.

But during all this first afternoon I am riveted by the doings of Parnell—the man who, so cold and aloof, exercised an electric power over the rest of his fellow creatures: the man who smashed the machinery of the House of Commons, in order to compel the British to deal with the Irish question.

I was at school when some of the most stirring acts of that drama were being played. All schoolboys are, of course, “Conservatives,” and our schoolmaster was a fanatical Tory. The mere mention of Mr. Gladstone’s name maddened him, and I remember one day his telling the boys that he had received a circular from some political Liberal association, and that he intended to send it back to the secretary with

a penny inside it, so that the sender should have to pay eightpence. This was a good civic lesson for the young! All the boys professed to be staunch Tories; but if it was discovered that one's parents were Liberals, one was labelled Liberal. This was my unfortunate predicament.

The general election of 1885 took place when I was at school. The Head Master addressed the school when it began, and he prefaced his speech by saying, "There are only seven Liberals in the school." This was nice for the Liberals.

On the 5th of November an effigy of Chamberlain was burned in the garden. The effigy bore a large cardboard cow with the words "Three Acres" written on it. Years afterwards I described this incident in an article for a London daily. In mentioning Chamberlain I added the words, "who was at that time a radical." The editor crossed out these words. The Conservative readers of this daily were not to be reminded that Chamberlain had ever been a

radical. It seemed almost like blasphemy to hint at such a thing. And yet it was true. Unless history be suppressed altogether, the fact will have to go down to posterity that in 1885 Chamberlain was a radical. It seemed a terrible shame in those days that one's parents should be on what, in the opinion of one's world, was obviously the wrong side.

English private schools are, or were, the most curious institutions in the world. The parents of to-day say they are entirely changed and altered. They may be; but one thing is quite certain, the parents don't know. The only people who know are the boys, and they don't reveal the secrets of the fortress until they are grown up; but, judging by what grown-up boys of twenty now tell one, they do not seem to me to be greatly changed.

My school was totally unlike the schools depicted in fiction and pictured by the boyish imagination. There were no bullies — at least,

not among the boys; the masters did the bullying. They exercised a reign of terror; they ruled by mysterious hints and vague threats, so that one moved perpetually under the shadow of an impending but unknown doom. The sense of guilt for some crime which one did n't know the nature of was perpetually being brought home to one. And the boys used to catch the tone of mystery, and act as if they formed part of the conspiracy, which, of course, they did n't. They were all equally in the dark.

The discretion of boys is extraordinary: their fear of giving anything away; their constant profession of happiness, in spite of obvious misery. But then, of course, it must be remembered that they accept the conditions of school life as the best that life has to offer. They think that *is* happiness.

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In the evening after dinner some of the "boys" played poker. Gradually I made their acquaint-

ance. One of them told me of the life in Buenos Ayres. He asked me to lend him a book. He had a pal who read books, and was in fact reading, he said, a book which he believed to be the *best book in print*. That was a nice phrase, and I have already quoted it. He fetched the book: it turned out to be "Monte Cristo." I agree as to the description of it.

In another book on English prisons I have read just lately, called "A Holiday in Gaol," the writer says that "Monte Cristo" was engaged half a dozen deep by the prisoners at Wormwood Scrubbs.

The "boy" turned over the leaves of "Monte Cristo" and came across the name "Sinbad the Sailor," and asked me whether it was the same story as "Sinbad the Sailor," because he had seen that played at Sydney, and could n't make it out. It is, indeed, not very easy to make out the story of "Sinbad the Sailor" from a pantomime version.

I saw this actual version of "Sinbad the Sailor" later in Wellington, and a very good pantomime it was; but lucidity and cohesion of plot were not its strongest points.

In Sydney pantomimes go on all the year round, I am told, and not only at Christmas time, as in England.

I was playing patience after dinner. This led to talking of fortune-telling by cards, and one of the Sydney "boys" asked me to tell his fortune, which I did, as well as that of five or six others. The next day one of them informed me that I had told their fortunes "to a tick."

Let me hastily say that I don't believe there is anything in it; but cards are uncanny things all the same, and fruitful in odd coincidences.

Once when I was travelling in Russia I met a man who professed to tell fortunes by cards. It was in a third-class railway carriage and the man was a poor man. This is how he did it. He told one to wish, and then dealt out his cards in

the orthodox manner; but he added, "When you wish, you must n't think of a green horse or else your wish won't come true." As if after being told such a thing one could help thinking of a green horse.

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I am reading a book by that delightful author, William de Morgan, called "Somehow Good." He is one of those authors who does the work for you. The book reads itself: just in the same way as Italian servants say that crockery breaks. For instance, an Italian servant never says, "The cook has broken a plate," but "A plate has broken itself to the cook." (*Si e rotto un piatto alla cuoca.*)

I have often wondered how housemaids acquired the apparently innate genius they possess for breaking things. It certainly amounts to genius; for it happens automatically and suddenly, as if prompted by divine and authentic inspiration. The gift is apparently shared by

steerage passengers in a liner. The chief officer of the liner in which I travelled from England told me, before we had reached Fremantle, that twelve hundred glasses had been broken in the steerage. (There were eight hundred passengers.)

Sailors and Chinamen never break anything; but, on the other hand, there is nothing that children will not break. Children are like white ants; they are entirely destructive, and they construct nothing, except sand castles. And sand is the best safety-valve for the terrible and unlimited powers of childhood that exists.

This has been noted by the poet, who says: —

“On the other hand,
Children in ordinary dress
May always play with sand.”

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In reading through the last pages that I have written, I am struck by the fact that there is very little about travel in these supposed notes on travel. The word longitude has not yet



YOU MUST N'T THINK OF A GREEN HORSE

occurred, and no scrap of information that could be of any possible practical use to any one has yet been given. Does it matter?

Practical information can be sought for in guidebooks. I say *sought for* purposely, for it can really only be obtained by experience. As for geographical details, I cannot think that the perusal of them is very interesting. And then, in writing on random subjects under a misleading title, I am only following well-known precedents. For instance, if you buy a modern book on "Gardening," what do you find? You open the book, say, at the chapter headed "June," and you find this kind of thing:—

I don't think the pictures in the Royal Academy are so good this year as they were last: but the average level is on the whole higher. I remember Lord Melbourne saying that the Academy was the only picture gallery he really enjoyed, because the pictures told one stories and there was no damned nonsense of art about them. I am sorry that the girls of the present day are no longer taught sketching. Every girl should be able to sketch badly. Albums

of sketches, made on the Continent, are a great resource on rainy Saturdays, and do well to sell at bazaars.

Italy is a good subject for sketching. Apropos of Italy, I came across the following poem in the South Wiltshire "Gazette." It was said to be by Wordsworth, but a kind correspondent tells me that it is really by Miss Ellen F. Winthrop, who died at Beverly, Massachusetts, in 1887, at the age of seventy-three: —

Lines written at Florence

Look upward, for the sky is not all cloud.
Look forward, think not of the dismal shroud.
No lane but has a turning, and no road
That leads not somewhere to a warm abode.
Take courage. If the day seems rather long,
The cooling dew will fall at evensong.

Believe, and Doubt is sure to slink away,
Doubt is a cur; and Fear is but a fool;
Rely upon yourself and let your stay
Be the observance of the heavenly rule.
Never say die; and do not be afraid;
At eventide the wages will be paid.

A Dutch friend of mine gave me the following very good recipe for cooking anchovies: "Take an

old garden hat, boil for seven minutes in boiling water. Add four pounds of cinnamon, one nutmeg, and half a glass of Chablis. Cut the anchovies in pieces and place on china plate. Pour the boiling water over them, and serve tepid with slices of lemon."

Another friend of mine gave me this quaint, old-fashioned recipe for boiling a turkey: "Gather strawberry leaves on Lamas Eve, press them in the distillery until the aromattick perfume thereof becomes sensible. Take a fat turkey and pluck him, and baste him, then enfold him carefully in the strawberry leaves. Then boyl him in water from the well, and add rosemary, rue, parsefoil, passevelours, carraway, floramour, velvet flower, lavender, thistles, stinging nettles, and other sweet smelling herbs. Add also a pinte of Canary wine, and half pound of butter and one of ginger passed through the sieve. Serve with plums and stewed raisons and a little salt. Cover him with a silver dish cover. The Compleat Cook, 1656."

Appended to this was the quaint motto:—

"Live and learne, for flowyrres fade,
June waiteth not for man or mayde."

That is the kind of thing you will find in the

June chapter of the modern book on "Gardening."

Then, if you take a book on a definite place, called, say, Rome. What do you find? Facts? No. Dates? No. But something like this:—

The Spirit of Rome (with apologies to Vernon Lee)

May 11. We drove this afternoon to the Villa Madama; on the way we talked of Richard Strauss and the non-melodic musicians. Strauss is a Dionysiac. We compared his prophetic mood-music with the old-fashioned facile melodies of Wagner that pleased our youth. While we were talking a shepherd passed us. As he passed he took off his hat and said, "Buon giorno." Very Roman that.

May 27. Porta Pia. A ragged cloud in the west and the sun shining very pale and watery. Passed a man playing a harmonium. P—— insisted on stopping to listen and the man asked him the time. This is the kind of thing that only happens to P—— and in Rome.

May 31. Mount Aventine. S—— and I strolled up the hill. We walked into a church (blonde marbles and seaweed-coloured pillars). A woman dressed in a bonnet and black silk came in and said her

prayers. S—— said this reminded her of Boston. Why?

June 2. Sunday. Heard a sermon in the afternoon at the church of St. Praxed. (Alas! the tomb of Browning's Bishop is not there, nay, probably Browning had another church in his eye.) The priest in the middle of his sermon, yawned, and said, "Basta!" Then, for the first time during this visit, for the first time since twenty years, I felt the unmistakable thrill of recognition, and said, "This is Rome."

Or there is another method. That is the contemplative historic description of something you have never seen (the Belloc method). You don't pretend to have seen it; but you describe what you might have felt, had you seen it. It is something like this: —

I have never been to Arles. But yesterday as I was walking along the Roman Road between Chancetonbury and Horsham, I thought of Arles. Arles is perpetually seeking new things in Europe. Arles has the spirit, the judgment, and the greatness of the thirteenth century. Chicago differs utterly in mood from Arles. In Chicago there is war. You

buy a newspaper and ten to one the leading article will be an affirmation or a denial of a creed or a dogma. In Arles you may buy newspapers for a month and get nothing but the record of the weather, two days old. And, as I consider the two towns, neither of which I have visited, I find almost as great a pleasure in imagining them as in remembering the sharp pictures of Birmingham and Swindon. I have been to Swindon; and that reminds me, Swindon has a song of its own. It is called "If the Swin was in the Swim." I have great hopes of the town of Swindon.

The world has become introspective and subjective. People no longer write about what they heard or saw. They assume that the reader knows all that. But they describe what they felt and thought on Monday, or on Tuesday, or on any other day of the week. Anatole France started the game by saying that criticism was the adventures of the soul among masterpieces.

This method came as a boon to reviewers and critics: they no longer had to pretend to read the books they reviewed. To dramatic critics,

especially, the system was invaluable; but they have now carried it further still. The "literary" critic who wrote an account of a play instead of telling you what the play was about and the effect it had on the audience, gave you his "impressions" of the play. But now he just gives you his impressions: not his impressions of the play, but his impressions of anything: the Woman's Suffrage Movement — the Rocky Mountains. He need scarcely mention the play; but it is generally done. These impressions he will write in the obscure dialect of modern Oxford, which consists of a complicated kind of literary slang. He writes so carefully that it is impossible to know exactly what he means. He will begin by describing a journey he has just made; he will continue to give you his views on Henry James, or the principles of art, then he will suddenly find after two columns of disquisition that he has come to the end of his space, and he will put off dealing with the play to the following

week. By that time he will have forgotten what he meant to be going to say, and he will be obliged to write a new disquisition on something else. That is how the "literary critic" deals with the drama to-day. I find no fault with the system.

This is how the "literary" critic would deal with "Hamlet" were "Hamlet" a new play:—

A Non-Conductor

Last week I had a good deal to say about the possible effect of woman's suffrage on art, and this led me to disagree, as the French say, on the attitude of Aristophanes towards the woman question. The fault I have to find with Mr. Shakespeare's play which was produced tentatively at the Repertory Theatre in Wolverhampton last Tuesday, will be plainer when I have first explained the reason why Walt Whitman never wrote a play.

Walt Whitman had probably the greatest unexpressed dramatic gift of the century. He was the most potentially dramatic of all the modern poets: although his centrifugality led him out, so to speak, of his perspective, and shifted his dioramic outlook

from the psychologic-human to the devisualized-ideal. Yes, Whitman was perhaps the greatest dramatist who never wrote a play: with the possible exception of Browning, who wrote plays which were in reality unbegun novels. Unlike Swinburne, whose system consisted of finishing his play before it began and filling up the space with deciduous phrases. Swinburne and Browning are the two great negative poles of drama: Whitman is the inverted mute magnet, who repelled drama from him instead of attracting it. I will explain, and in order to explain, we must go back to the Indian drama; etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Here, on the other hand, in contrast to this, is an example of the older impressionist method; a short notice written in a cheap newspaper, by a critic who has not had time to see the last act, and to whom the manager has refused to give a sketch of the plot: —

Hamlet: Puzzle-Play at the Pantheon

Mr. Shakespeare is presumably a new writer. I don't remember having seen any of his work before, although it was rumoured last night that he had once

been guilty of some sonnets. He may be able to write sonnets; but writing sonnets is one thing and writing a play is another. Not that there is no cleverness and no promise in "Hamlet"; but it is a literary cleverness, and not a dramatic cleverness.

The play suffers from dullness, length, and want of action. There is far too much talk from beginning to end. And the talk is not dramatic. Mr. Shakespeare has made the unpardonable mistake of not making his intention clear.

Is Hamlet, the hero of this rather disagreeable family imbroglio, meant to be mad, or is he meant to be simulating madness? Is the ghost a real ghost? Are we to take it seriously, or is it merely the practical mystification of a royal buffoon?

And what are we to think of the heroine? Is she really mad also? Or is her madness a literary device contrived so as to afford Mr. Shakespeare opportunities for "lyricism" and incidental music? Either Mr. Shakespeare meant to write a serious tragedy on the subject of madness, or he meant to parody the prevalent mania for so-called psychological studies: but the audience, being at a loss to know what he meant, was merely puzzled and bored. The actors did their best with their thankless task, and Mrs. Siddons, who celebrated her diamond

jubilee last Thursday, looked younger than ever in the somewhat ungrateful part of the peevish and provoking heroine.

The upshot of all this digression is that I wish to excuse myself for having written at random by the exposition of current models and precedents.

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After a four days' voyage from Sydney, I have arrived at the other end of the world: Antipodes.

Wellington: August 10

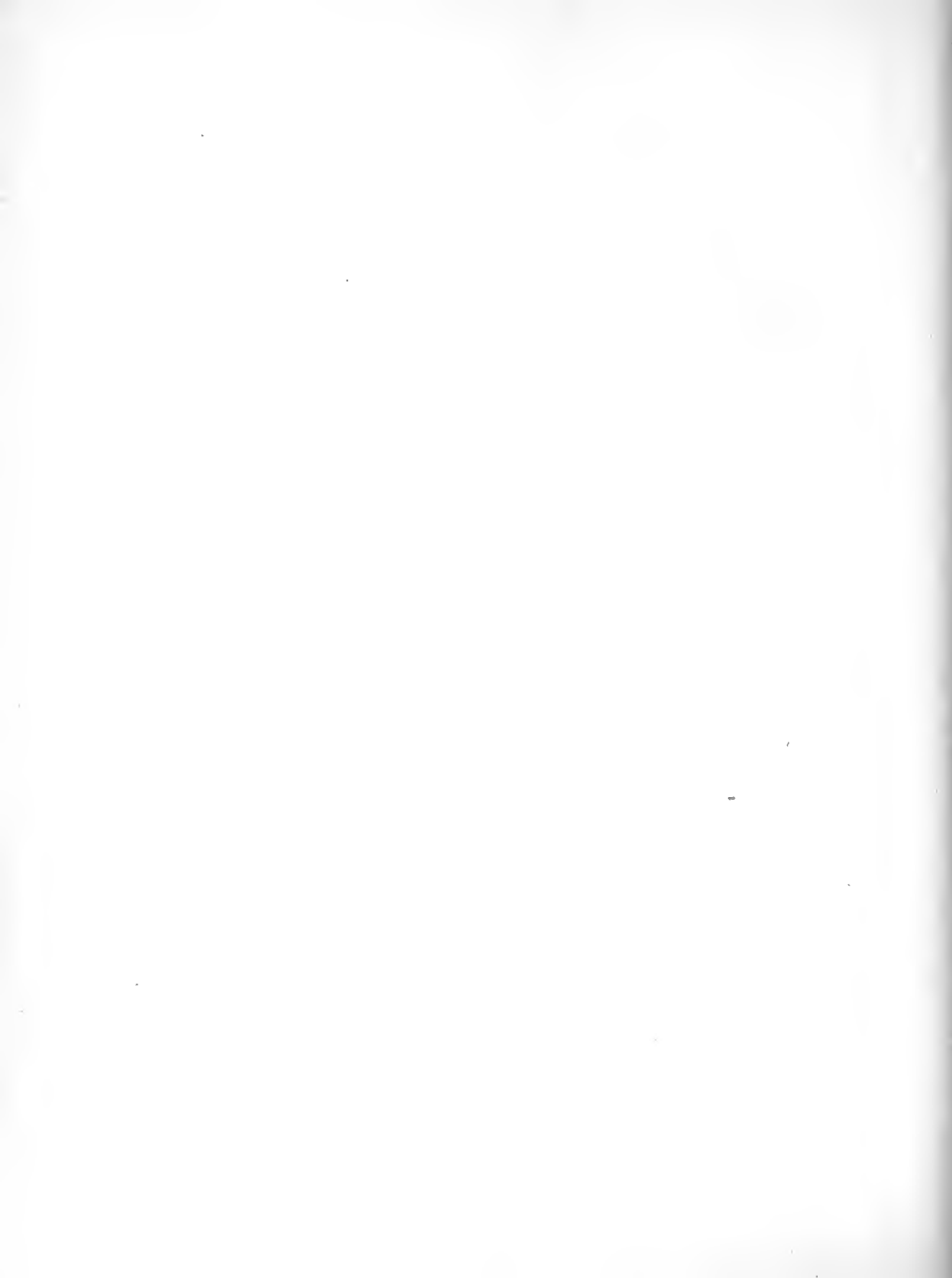
IT is the end of winter here, the beginning of spring; and colder, of course, than it is in Australia. The Wellington wind which you hear so much of you feel and hear a great deal as soon as you get up on to the hills. In the town I think you feel it less than one is told.

Before sailing from London, five people told me that you can always tell a Wellington man because he holds on his hat when he walks round a corner of a street, because the wind blows round the corners. Everybody in the ship coming out, to whom I mentioned New Zealand, told me the story again, until at last I thought of having a small placard hanging round my neck with "I know how to tell a Wellington man" written on it, or "Don't tell me the story of the Wellington man and wind; I know it."

The first thing that strikes an Englishman about the landscape of New Zealand is the absence of



A WELLINGTON MAN TURNING A STREET CORNER



atmosphere. The jagged hills stand out sharp against the clear sky like a photograph seen through a stereoscope. There are no half-lights, no melting mist or wreathing haze, no vague distances.

Another thing which strikes the stranger is the volcanic appearance of the hills and the soil. New Zealand is a tropical island cooled and made temperate by the neighbourhood of the South Pole. Wellington nestles among steep hills covered with light-green grass and shorn of all trees. Its roofs are nearly all red. If you climb up a hill you see the view on either side of it, and the sea, very deep and blue.

Not so very many years ago New Zealand was covered with bush; and the vegetation must have been riotously splendid, for what remains is very fine.

My first walk in the country along the beach, where a very blue sea breaks over sharp brown rocks, and high cliffs stand out sharp and sheer, reminded me of South Devon.

My first long drive in the country reminded me of Russia, that is to say, of eastern Siberia and Transbaikalia. The little wooden one-storied houses, with red iron roofs and verandahs, might have been taken from Siberia. The sharp outline of the hills, the colour of the scrub, the clearness of the sky, all this is very much like what you see from the windows of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Another thing the stranger will notice immediately is the limpidity of the streams and the water.

Everybody tells me that this is the wrong time of year to be in New Zealand. One should be here in the summer: that is to say, in November and December. One should be able to camp out in the bush, by the great lakes, where the black swans sweep and wheel in the transparent after-glow.

I shan't see all that, alas! because it is practically winter now. I shall miss probably all the important sights.

In Wellington you see a great many private automobiles; very few public cabs and taxis. Most people use the tram-cars, which is much the most convenient way of getting about, let alone the cheapness.

The first thing that strikes you in Wellington is the well-to-do-ness of everybody. There are no beggars; the workmen are all well off. The people seem quite extraordinarily happy.

Near Palmerston: August 20

I HAVE spent four days in the country near Palmerston. As you travel in the train the country is more like eastern Siberia than ever. In the distance you see a sharp range of blue hills, in the foreground a flat plain on which little squat one-storied wooden houses with red iron roofs are dotted about.

The small provincial cities, too, are — as in Australia — very like the provincial towns in Russia. The streets are broad and the houses have verandahs.

Another point of resemblance: the way the people ride. You meet children riding back from school, two on a pony. They seem to belong to the pony. They ride like little centaurs. This reminds me of the evenings in the plains of the Russian country, where one used to see the children of the village galloping off bareback on large horses and driving a lot of riderless horses to the river, to water them.

As you drive in the country in New Zealand, the first thing you notice is the tall gum-trees, and whenever you get near the bush you hear the song of strange, unfamiliar birds. No native-born New Zealand bird has wings.

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The New Zealanders are born footballers. You see the children playing everywhere. On every Saturday afternoon there is a big football match, and crowds of people look on. Rugby football is the national game of New Zealand, and I suppose the New Zealanders are the best players in the world.

At the Athletic Park Ground you often see two matches going on at once. It is extremely difficult to watch two matches at once; because the moment you begin to watch something in the one, something interesting is sure to happen in the other. One would think, speaking as an outsider, that the Rugby game is far more interesting to look on at than the Association game.

But the Londoner does not think so. Every Saturday in London, and, indeed, all over England, thousands of people look on at the Association game, and they care very much less for Rugby, which they consider to be a "toff's game." There is, they say, "too much shirt-tearing" about it for their taste.

Rugby football in New Zealand has not yet been spoiled by professionalism. People think it is an honour to play for a team, and they are willing to travel and play all over the country for the honour of it, and without remuneration.

In England professionalism has spoiled not only football but almost every other game, with the possible exception of "Old Maid," cribbage, and "My Bird Sings."

The result is: —

- (1) People prefer looking on at games to playing them themselves.
- (2) They demand professionals and they bet on them.

- (3) Some games become so professionally perfect that people no longer care to look on at them.

The passion of the crowd in England for watching football is looked upon by many people as the most ominous sign of national decadence, and as a manifestation resembling that of the gladiatorial shows in ancient Rome. They say it is this passion for watching, and for betting in the watching, that is responsible for the prevalence of professionalism. In England one local club buys a celebrated player from another local club. Therefore, it is obvious that this is the death of any real local spirit.

As for the games becoming so professional that people lose interest in them, this does not apply to football: but it does apply to cricket. In the last years there is in England a great falling-off in the public interest in cricket. The play has become so perfect that nobody cares to look at it.'

And even, or rather especially, at the schools in England, games have become ultra-professional.

All this is a pity, but it does not apply to New Zealand. New Zealand has, up to now, been unspoiled by professionalism. Long may it remain so. One football enthusiast told me that the cloven hoof was making its appearance.

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What most people want to hear about New Zealand are facts with regard to the economic situation of the country: the labour question, the effects of woman's suffrage, the drink question, prohibition, etc. Now, unless one makes a really thorough and serious study of these questions, which it is impossible to do without devoting considerable time to it, without, in fact, living in the country for a reasonable period, it is worse than useless to fire off a few superficial and dogmatic generalizations. It is for this reason that I forbear from discussing them here.

Wellington: September

THE first manifestations of the spring have taken the form of rain and wind. Whenever the wind is in the south, the weather is cold: for the wind comes straight from the South Pole. But luckily the rain does not last long. Changes of weather in New Zealand are very sudden. The hills are now covered with gorse in bloom. Daffodils are out everywhere; and in the town you see arum lilies that grow wild in New Zealand in great profusion; but I imagine their time is later.

I am leaving the country just as the pleasant season is beginning, and I am leaving before I have had time to see the most interesting places in it. I have not seen New Zealand; but I have seen Wellington, and I have had a glimpse of the country. I have seen the Parliament sitting. I have met many interesting people. I have been to two concerts, one picture-show, one hospital,

one theatre, and four football matches. I have not been to one thing: and that is morning tea.

Morning tea is, I believe, a custom peculiar to New Zealand. The New Zealanders give teas at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Eleven o'clock in the morning is the time when one feels most exhausted. Refreshment of some kind at 11 A.M. is surely a need of human nature; and the New Zealanders have done well to crystallize the need into a tradition and a habit.

Tea and whisky seem to be the national drinks of New Zealand — especially whisky. But tea is often drunk at meals.

The impression that prevails in England that New Zealand is a place where you can't get anything to drink, is a false one. Of course, some of the cities in the country are under the ban of prohibition, and so are certain portions of Wellington itself: from these you have to cross the street into such territory as lies outside the ban. The railway cars are teetotal.

The people here often tell you that they are being over-legislated. And one notable New Zealander told me that what the country most needed was improvement in higher education. The people, he said, did not care for higher education. Their point of view was material. They would n't do things unless there was something to show for it.

In Wellington there are four large, long streets full of shops, tall stone buildings, English in character, hotels, banks, etc., with verandahs covering the pavement the whole way, and cars running through them. Outside of these streets, the houses are mostly built of wood, and resemble, as I have already said, those of a Russian provincial town.

The prices strike an Englishman as high, and the cost of living in New Zealand is undoubtedly high. The wages are, from our point of view, enormously high. A good chauffeur (I know of a case in point) can get £4 a week, and a house.

From the English point of view such wages are very high indeed.

The New Zealanders strike me as being much more like English people than the Australians. Of course they have characteristics of their own. One thing is certain — a more friendly, hospitable people does not exist.

To go into the matter of their institutions, life, etc., would need a far more prolonged study and stay than I have been able to make, and I have already said, three or four times, that I don't believe in pronouncing judgments on a country before you know it thoroughly.

One of the most interesting people I have met here is a French lady of the highest culture and education, Sœur Marie Joseph, who is at the head of a Home of Compassion for derelict children. She went out to the Crimean War under Florence Nightingale and looked after the wounded on the battlefields that knew nothing of anæsthetics. She told me that sometimes the

doctors, after a day of surgical operations, would be drunk with the fumes of the blood. The wounded had to be tied down to be operated on, and sometimes, where this was not practicable, people had to sit on them to hold them down.

Sœur Marie Joseph is very fond of New Zealand. She came out, attracted by what she heard of the Maoris, and she knows the Maoris with an intimate thoroughness. She has a great admiration for them; and she gave me many instances of their chivalry and nobility of character. She has seen great changes since she has been in New Zealand. When she first came, she told me, New Zealand was covered with bush — that is to say, with magnificent forests; and the population, then, she says, was like one large family.

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This morning at one of the Catholic churches here the priest preached a most interesting sermon. Among other things he told the following

story. He said, "The other day I met a man who said, 'I am a better Catholic than you are; because I go to all the churches: the Catholic, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, etc.' " On the following Sunday the priest passed this same man as he was working in his garden, and he said to him, "You may go to all the churches, but you don't obey the precepts of any of them; for they all tell you not to work on Sunday." The man laughed.

A few days after the priest met the man again in the town, and the man said to him: "I have just had the narrowest escape. I fell off a car and my legs were underneath it, and I was within an ace of being run over, when mercifully it stopped just in time."

"Well," said the priest, "I think that was due to me, because, when I saw you working last Sunday, I prayed for the salvation of your legs."

Rorotonga and Tahiti: September

I LEFT Wellington on September 13 on the steamship Moana, one of the steamers belonging to the Union Steamship Company.

There was a great deal of excitement at the send-off, because the Rugby Union Football Team from Australia were on board. They had come from Sydney and were on their way to San Francisco, in order to play against the local teams there. These football boys had arrived the day before, and had had a respite of twenty-four hours from the inclemency of the sea, which they had greatly enjoyed (the respite, I mean, not the sea). Some of them had never been away from Australia before. Several of them, or, indeed, nearly all of them with the exception of about seven, were indifferent sailors. They remained on shore as long as they possibly could, one of them climbing up the gangway as it was actually being pulled up. The ship sailed amidst cheering and singing.

The southern Pacific, especially that part of it which is near New Zealand, is not a pleasant sea. The steamer pitched, and altogether the comfort of passengers was considerably interfered with during the first two days of the voyage. We started on Friday, and owing to the change of time we had two Saturdays running. (Let mathematicians explain that if they can.) It was not until the Sunday which followed the two Saturdays that the sea began to be smooth enough to allow the passengers to behave like human beings instead of like half-inanimate corpses.

On Sunday most of the football boys emerged from their cabins and began training on the upper deck. They boxed, they wrestled, they ran, they played leap-frog, they formed scrimmages; in fact, they displayed every form of energy which human bones and muscles are capable of.

The weather grew warmer, and on the Tuesday

we got to the southeast trade winds. The day after this the steamer called at the island of Roratonga. Roratonga is an island which consists of sharp and jagged little hills entirely covered with a riotous green vegetation.

In thinking of the South Sea Islands, and of tropical islands in general, if you have never seen them, one may not realise that the general appearance of them must necessarily be green, since they are entirely covered with vegetation. One imagines a few palm-trees sticking up out of the sea, instead of a range of mountains covered with trees. As you first catch sight of Roratonga, you realise what New Zealand must have been like when it was covered with bush, only, of course, the climate of Roratonga is far milder and far warmer. The moment the steamer reaches Roratonga a great quantity of natives set out in boats from the shore and swarm on board. They are not black; they are not copper-coloured; they are a sort of dull almond

colour, with very black hair and very dark brown eyes. They wear large straw hats; some of them have flowers in their hair and behind their ears.

As soon as you reach the shore the aspect of the island, which you might think disappointing at a distance, changes entirely. You are caught in a sort of warm embrace of aromatic deliciousness. Hibiscus bushes, with great scarlet blossoms, surround you on every side; cocoa palms, and all vegetation which you expect to see in a tropical island, are there before your eyes. But you will say, "If it is just the same as any other tropical island, what is the use of describing it — if it is merely what one sees in the East? You have already spoken of Ceylon." Well, Roratonga and the islands of the South Seas are not in the least like Ceylon, and they are not in the least like anything in the Near or Far East. They have a peculiar charm which is completely individual, and totally unlike anything else. The sights and the people of these



NATIVES SWARMING ON BOARD

Southern places are utterly unlike the sights and people you see in the East—in Ceylon, for instance. There is nothing here of that hard, metallic element which you get in the East; nothing of that inscrutable mystery, that shadow of cruelty, which you feel in the Orient. The people are like the climate — soft and gentle; and they talk in musical tones, like the twittering of birds; and their speech is careless as the laughing talk of children. They reminded me of that race of people whom H. G. Wells describes in his book “The Time Machine,” that same people whom he imagines as living aboveground in the far, far distant future, when the industrial population of the world had grown into a sort of human flesh-eating lemur, which could only live underground and could only see in the dark. Mr. Wells represents the other and the civilized half of the population as having progressed or degenerated, whichever you like, into a race of childlike, amiable, and playful little people, who live on fruit

in tumble-down houses, and who are as careless and irresponsible as butterflies. The people of Roratonga reminded me of this fancy of Mr. Wells's.

At a little hotel where I stopped to eat some fresh bananas (and, oh, the difference between the fresh bananas and those which one buys at a store in Europe!) the woman who kept the hotel, and who had come from South Africa, talked of the natives. She said: "It is impossible to get them to work. If you find any fault with them they go away. It is we poor white people who have to do all the work. I would like," she said, "to shambok them as they do in South Africa, so lazy and impossible they are sometimes, but we are not allowed to touch them. But then," she added, "of course one can't blame them, because they are quite well off without working. They have got enough to live on without doing any work." I thought that it would, indeed, be unreasonable to blame these

natives for not slaving for white people if they were not obliged to do so. The fact is that in these islands work for the natives is not a necessity; it is a hobby. It is to them what gardening must have been to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in the days before the Fall. If Adam and Eve gardened then, they gardened for fun. After the Fall of Man, they had to garden for a living and not from choice. Well, the native inhabitants of the South Sea Islands seem to have escaped or to be exempted from the primal curse; in fact, I believe that the islands of Tahiti and Rorotonga are two bits of the Garden of Eden which were allowed to remain in the world so as to show mankind what they had lost by Eve's curiosity, Adam's disobedience, and the Devil's spite.

We walked along the coast of this island up to the house of the missionary, where there was a large field. The football boys wanted to practise. We certainly envied the missionary his house. It stood under a huge shelving hill cov-

ered with palm-trees, in a perfect labyrinth of flowers. When the boys began to play football, the natives came in great crowds and stood round chirping with delight like birds; and when the boys had finished practising, they threw the football to the natives and told them they might play. At first, the natives fought shy of the football, — I imagine that they thought they would have to play against these terrifically efficient and mustular representatives of New South Wales; but when they realised that the boys did not want to play with them, and that they could play among themselves, they took to the game with great eagerness, and were soon enjoying themselves greatly. It was curious that by just looking on they had picked up a very good idea of the game, the main features of which they mimicked with some skill; one little boy was an excellent tackler.

One was struck by the extraordinarily musical quality of their voices and their language,

which consists almost entirely of soft open vowels, and which is, I suppose, the most melodious of all human languages.

Before going back to the steamer, which was to sail in a few hours, I bathed in the sea, in a warm azure sea, and then, after eating more bananas and a delicious bitter fruit called "Brazilian cherries," I went on board once more.

From Roratonga it only takes two days to get to the island of Tahiti, and the steamer anchored at Papeete on Friday, the 20th September.

Roratonga gives you a kind of foretaste of the whole charm and beauty of the South Seas. It is the appetizer, the *hors-d'œuvre*, not the whole meal. Tahiti is the whole thing; the real thing; the thing one has dreamt about all one's life; the thing which made Stevenson leave Europe forever. All tellers of fairy tales, and all poets from Homer downwards, have always imagined the existence of certain islands which were so full of magic and charm that they turned man from

his duty and from all tasks, labour, or occupation in which he was engaged, and held him a willing captive, who would not sell his captivity for all the prizes of the busy world.

Stevenson in one of his books — “The Wrecker,” I think — says that if a man who was toiling in some English town were to be suddenly transported to one of the South Sea Islands, in the neighbourhood of Tahiti, and had a vision of the beauty that is there, and then were to be transported back again to his prosaic and ugly surroundings, he would say, “At any rate, I have had my dream.” That is how one feels when one has seen Tahiti. One feels one has had one’s dream.

The Bay of Papeete curves inward. As you sail into it you are sure to see several white schooners at anchor. At one side is a range of light-blue volcanic hills stretching out into the crystalline sea, reminding one of Naples, Capri, and Sorrento, and in the middle of the bay there

is a tiny little island, consisting of a few cocoa palms. The sea is a transparent azure; little white houses are dotted all along the line of the beach, nestling in greenery. We got there in the afternoon and landed at once. We walked along the beach into the little town, and into the suburbs of it. It was spring in Tahiti, and every kind of imaginable blossom was flaunting its reckless and extravagant beauty. Everything grows wild in Tahiti. Nobody seems to bother about gardening or anything of that kind. It is not only the lilies who do not toil and spin, but the gardeners also. The unaided results of nature are so prodigious that the imagination is staggered to think of what might be done supposing an energetic gardener were let loose in these islands and allowed to try experiments. He would produce such a garden as the world has never seen.

I scarcely knew the names of any of the fruits or any of the blossoms which I saw. There were

mango-trees, laden with mangoes which were not yet ripe; bamboo - trees, breadfruit - trees, cocoa palms, banana-trees, hibiscus bushes, a tree with a bright pink blossom which looked like a Judas-tree, but which was not one, bushes with intense mauve- and deep lilac-coloured flowers, and broad avenues of large green trees which shaded the road from the hot sun with great fanlike branches. As we walked along this avenue, on both sides of which there are little houses, we caught glimpses of wonderfully luxuriant and untrained gardens.

There seemed to be no birds except blackbirds and mina birds, which were hopping about in great quantities.

The people seem extraordinarily contented and invincibly indolent. I was walking along the main street and I wanted to get to the post-office, which I knew was somewhere along that street. I stopped at a store and asked whether I was going the right way. The storekeeper —

who was a Frenchman — said, yes, I was going right. I then asked if it was far. The storekeeper said, oh, yes, it was very far; indeed, it would take me a good quarter of an hour or twenty minutes to walk there. I asked him if I could hire a conveyance, as I was in a hurry. He shook his head and thought it unlikely. I then went on my way. I thought I would just time myself and see how long it did take to reach the post-office. I walked fast; but I found, to my amazement, that it took me exactly three minutes to get there. Doubtless it would have taken a native of Tahiti twenty minutes. There is no such thing as hurry and no such thing as energy in these islands.

At five o'clock in the evening the football boys gave a display in front of the Governor's house, and crowds of natives witnessed it. After that we all went to bathe in the bay, where sharks rarely come, although they do come sometimes.

In the evening we went to a picture-show,

where there was a boxing-match between some native champions.

The people say that if you once drink of the water of Tahiti you will be bound to go there again, and I do not wonder at this. It is certainly the most fascinating and most beautiful spot I have ever seen. Its fascination lies not so much in the profusion and wealth of luxuriant vegetation and exotic colouring as in its subtle and indescribable charm. You do not feel as if you were in a hothouse. You feel as if you were in a most delicious country. You walk along by the side of streams where you see people doing their washing; you hear the cry of poultry; you see people driving oxen along the shady road. There is a wonderful fragrance in the air. Schooners come into the harbour from the other islands: the Marquesas Islands, etc. The Europeans walking about in their white clothes do not look like the Europeans you see in Ceylon, all washed out and wearied from the heat and

strain; they look as if they were enjoying life, as if they were happy where they were.

There is a large Chinese population in Tahiti, but they busy themselves for the most part with agriculture. They do not do much work for the white people. The labour problem in Tahiti is consequently very vexatious for the white people. It is difficult to get work done at all; therefore, life in Tahiti is expensive. Often, for instance, the natives on market-day will bring no meat to the market, because it bothers them to do so. Of course, if white people consented to live entirely on fruit, as the natives do, the question would be solved, and certainly the fruit there is excellent. But man cannot live by bread-fruit alone. He insists on sucking-pig and other more substantial delicacies; and to get these, in Tahiti, he has to pay money.

There is practically only one small hotel in Tahiti, a little two-storied house with a verandah. There are many French stores; the Governor's

House; the post-office; and a theatre. When the Panama Canal is opened, steamers, I suppose, will call at Tahiti in greater numbers than they do now, and that will be the time for speculators to build a larger hotel there. I have no fears of Tahiti ever being spoiled. It is the kind of place that will conquer civilization rather than be conquered by it. It was, at present, — I was told by people who had visited all the islands in the Pacific, — the most unspoiled of all of them. That is why I chose that route. Fiji is far more progressive, and I dare say far more satisfactory from a business and European point of view, but it is less interesting from a picturesque point of view.

I cannot imagine anything more ideal than to possess a schooner fitted with a small motor, in case of calm, and to cruise about the waters between Tahiti and the Marquesas, which, one is told, are indescribably beautiful.

I understand why Stevenson liked the South

Seas above all things. I also understand why he was so loath to write descriptive articles about them. They are things to be seen; they are places to be seen and lived in; not to be written about. The pen can give no idea of their charm. Stevenson does it in his stories, and so does another well-known author, Louis Becke, who is rightly supposed to be the best writer of fiction on the South Seas.

It is possible now to take trips to the Marquesas from Tahiti in trading schooners, but I believe that is not a comfortable manner of transport. The thing would be to have a schooner of one's own, — not an auxiliary schooner, because a schooner which is provided with steam ceases to be a sailing-vessel: the sails are never used; but a schooner fitted with a motor would ensure one against being becalmed, and, at the same time, the motor would not compete with and finally defeat the sails.

Lying at anchor in Papeete Harbour, there was

a magnificent sailing-vessel which had come from San Francisco. It may not be very long before such vessels cease to exist altogether. Every day wind-jammers are being turned into steamers, and sailing-vessels become fewer and fewer. It is a melancholy fact for those who love the sea.

We stayed at Papeete only twenty-four hours. If you stay longer than that, you have to stay there a month, because the steamers only call there once a month. Tahiti is not connected by cable with any other country. Loath as I was to go, at the end of the twenty-four hours I felt it was a good thing that I was doing so; otherwise I should have been tempted to remain there for the rest of my life. Apart from other things, the climate is intoxicatingly pleasant; hot, but not too hot; prodigal, at sunset, of the most gorgeous effects of color and light; indescribably wonderful in the night-time.

The most beautiful spots in Tahiti are inland

in the island, and it would take about a month to see the place properly. Papeete possesses three public automobiles for hire. I tried the whole of the morning on the day we left to get one of them, but they had all gone out. Apart from this, there are a few little carriages which act as cabs, driven by Chinamen, but they appear to go to sleep in the daytime, and only appear in the evening. The result was one had to walk about on one's feet the whole time, and at the end of the morning I did not wonder that the inhabitants of this island are disinclined to make strenuous efforts. It is the kind of place where you are perfectly satisfied to do nothing. That morning, nevertheless, was one of the most enjoyable I have ever spent. I walked up and down the streets, looking again and again at the gorgeous-coloured blossoms and the wonderful green trees.

Between the hours of eleven and one o'clock the stores shut, and the business of life is inter-

rupted for the midday meal and subsequent repose.

We left Tahiti in the afternoon, when the greater part of the population came down to the wharf to see us off. We left feeling like Ulysses when he was driven by force from the island of Calypso. And I for one, in any case, felt that come what might, I had had my dream. I had had a glimpse of Eden, a peep into the earthly paradise.

I have seen many of the beautiful corners of the world. A lake in Manchuria covered with large pink lotus flowers, as delicate as the landscape on a piece of Oriental china.

I have seen Linfa, the deserted ruin of the Roman Campagna, rising from waters thick with water-lilies, and a wilderness of leaves, like a castle which an enchanter has bade go to sleep for hundreds of years.

I have seen, in the Scilly Isles, that island which is a white garden set in the bluest of seas.

I have seen Capri, and the Greek Islands, and Brusa in Asia Minor in the spring, when the nightingales sing all day, and the roses are in full bloom, and the noise of running water is forever in your ears.

But never have I seen anything so captivating as Tahiti, as those long shady walks, those great green trees, that reckless, untutored glory of blossom and foliage, those fruits, those flowers, and the birdlike talk of those careless natives, who wreath themselves with flowers, and are happy without working, and who put scarlet flowers behind their ears to signify they are going to enjoy themselves: to have a good time; to paint the town red.

In Tahiti there are no snakes, and in this respect at least Tahiti is superior to the Garden of Eden, equal to Ireland.

*Across the Pacific: September 21 —
October 3*

IN describing the voyage across the Pacific (in "The Wrecker"), Stevenson says that there are certain periods in life which leave behind them a kind of roseate haze on the map of one's existence. You cannot remember the details; you are merely conscious of a kind of pleasant blur. I feel the same thing about my voyage from Tahiti to San Francisco, but I have not yet forgotten and shall never forget the details. That voyage stands out for me like a kind of bath which had the power of restoring one's youth for the time being. The trade winds blew freshly the whole time. There was a breeze even when we crossed "the line." It was tropically warm, and yet never for one hour too hot. It was only at the end of the voyage that the freshness was overdone, that the weather grew cold, and the sea too rough for comfort; otherwise the weather

was perfect. The huge clouds of the Pacific chased one another across the sky, as Stevenson describes them — “blotting out the stars” at night, and making fantastic citadels in the sunset.

Apropos of the stars in the tropics, one is always told that there is no twilight in these regions. This is not quite an accurate way of expressing it. What is accurate, is Coleridge’s line in “The Ancient Mariner,” when he says, “The Sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out.” He adds, “At one stride comes the dark.” The moment the sun goes down, you do see the stars at once; but the darkness that comes is not dark; the red afterglow down on the horizon, and above it the luminous mauve haze, which is peculiar to the tropics, lingers a long time, and against this the great shapes of the clouds stand out inky and black. It is a wonderful sight.

The football boys used to train twice a day. A large swimming-bath, made out of a sail, had

been fixed up on the deck, so that after toying with a little amateur training, one could take off one's clothes and splash about in the salt water. I do not think I ever enjoyed baths so much.

In the afternoon many of us used to take sunbaths, and lie half stripped on the upper deck in the sun, till our skin turned first red and then brown. At Sydney everybody takes these sunbaths, and this accounts for the bronzed complexion of the Australians.

The football boys had appetites which I have rarely seen equalled and never seen surpassed.

When I was at school at Eton, there was a phrase which was peculiar to the place, namely, "a brozier" (I am not certain that this is the right spelling). "A brozier" or "to brozier" meant when the boys ate all the food provided for them and clamored for more, until there was nothing left in the house.

There was, once upon a time, a much-vener-

ated lady at Eton, called Miss Evans, who ruled over a house of boys. One day the boys settled on "a brozier," and ate everything in the house, but Miss Evans was not to be defeated. She produced a large, evil-smelling cheese, and set it before the boys, and this cheese defeated them.

The football boys seemed capable of doing this every day, and the stewards were walked off their feet by the amount of fetching and carrying of dishes which they had to perform. As soon as the bugle blew, one heard a stampede of feet going down to the saloon. One felt inclined to quote Browning's celebrated poem, and say,—

"Dinner's at seven —
All 's right with the world."

It is a curious thing that I got to know more about Australia and New Zealand after having left it than I did when I was there, by the presence and companionship of these football boys from New South Wales. Most of them were Australians, some had come from New Zealand.

Besides being some of the best amateur football players in the world, they were the very best of good fellows, and to live with them was like being transported back again to Oxford or Cambridge and the days of one's youth.

After dinner in the evening choruses used to be sung, and singing in chorus is the crown of good-fellowship.

In the eighteenth century in England, whenever people met together to eat, drink, and enjoy themselves, they sang. Song, alas, is now dying out of modern England, but it still lingers in the haunts of the young. Very few people now write drinking-songs, and this surely testifies to a lamentable decay in our morals.

I shall always be thankful to this trip for having afforded me a better glimpse of the new world, which I obtained through the companionship of these fine sons of Australia and New Zealand, than I might have obtained by living for months in Wellington or Sydney, because on

board a small ship one gets to know people far more intimately than one does anywhere else, and it is by getting to know people that you arrive at an understanding of a country. It is not through sight-seeing that you get to know a country; it is through getting to know its people well, and through getting to know the right sort of people.

San Francisco: October 3

THERE is no subject in the world more hackneyed than American impressions. Nearly every month a writer of note discovers America over again. In spite of this, I am told, there is no stuff that is more eagerly read in the States, and outside of them, than impressions of America written by a foreigner. It does n't seem to matter whether such impressions are written by a writer of renown, such as H. G. Wells or Arnold Bennett, or by a totally unknown tourist; it does not matter whether they are well written or ill written, whether they are serious or flippant, amusing or dull; they are certain to be read.

I think I can understand the reason of this. People in any country like to read about themselves. They like to look upon their own image as it is reflected in the mirror of foreign observers.

It does not much matter what the mirror is like, so long as the image is there. There is no book

of impressions of England, for instance, that I could not read with interest.

Nevertheless, all this does not make the task of writing about America to an American public any easier. If one is writing exclusively for one's own native public, the task is not so difficult. One can describe an American hotel, for instance, a train, a tram-car; one can tell how one is shaved and how one's boots are blacked; but the American public knows that already. So the task resolves itself into this: one has to write about things which are intimately familiar to the public one is addressing, in such a manner as to make it possible for them to read what one writes without being tired to death and throwing the book at some one's head.

This being so, I revolve in my mind the different methods which could be applied to the task. First of all, there is the method to which I have already alluded, and in some cases used in these notes: the method of not writing about

America at all, but about something else. You would begin writing like this: "The day I arrived at San Francisco, I was thinking about Venice," and then you would write a chapter on Venice. But I do not think people would stand this.

Then you could use the manner of Bernard Shaw. You could write a "discussion" on America in three acts, in which an aeronaut, a milliner, a Salvation Army girl, a capitalist, a High-Church clergyman, and a lady Socialist would sit round a table and discuss America.

You would begin with a preface on trusts, Italian opera, vivisection, submarines, and prize-fighting. Then you would get to the discussion. This would be prefaced by five pages of stage-directions, with regard to the room in which the discussion was to take place. Then one of the characters would enter, and there would be two pages of stage-directions in very small print about the facial expression, the clothes, the boots,

the watch, the cigarette-case of that character. Then the character would do a little business,—open the window, perhaps, or shut it. More characters would enter, heralded by more stage-directions. Then the characters, having sat down, would discuss America, and incidentally every other country under the sun, especially England.

The discussion would be forbidden by the censorship in England, because one of the characters would be called Askfour, and this would be considered allusion to

(a) Mr. Asquith

(b) Mr. Balfour

(c) Sir George Askwith (on account of the “k”); —

and so the discussion would be acted in the Little Theatre at New York, and in London by the State Society on Sunday evenings.

Then I might adopt the method of Pierre Loti. This is called the “dot-and-dash” method. It is like the Morse code made poetic. You begin

a sentence and leave it unfinished, adding a lot of dots like this: —

New York.....

I am in New York — . — . . . but I am not thinking of New York.. — . . . — I am thinking of something else. . . . — ..the other places.....the Eastthe desert.....Stamboul.....Ispahan.....Sadi.....

(Then a whole line of dots.)

.

(Then you begin again.)

I am in New York.....tall buildings rise wistful and white in the pale milky sky..... They are very tall, those buildings.....They affect me with a strange longing to go away..... to be somewhere else.....anywhere else..... not here....There.....where?.....Beyond.. ..

Translate that into French, and you get the Loti-Morse method.

Then there is the Masfield method. That would consist in writing an enormously long poem about the Bowery, in verse full of exple-



VERY FEW WRITERS THINK WHEN THEY ARE WRITING

tives, oaths, and tough adjectives, called "Street-pity."

"Take that, and that, and go to Hell.
Hell, Hell, Hell, Hell."

On reflection, I reject all these methods. I will leave the matter to my pen.

The only way to write is to let the pen do the work, like what happens in planchette (except when somebody cheats). Very few writers think before they write or even when they are writing; they let their pen guide their thoughts. And I am certain that those writers who write too much suffer from a disease of the fingers and not of the brain.

Before saying a word about America, I apologize for anything I shall say which may sound or be absurd.

A wit once said that the American and English people had everything in common, except, of course, the language. There is, I think, a great deal of truth in this: the words are the

same, but they mean different things and they are used in different ways.

Some day, when I have learned the American language properly, I mean to write a large book on the American language. In the mean time, the following condensed grammar for foreigners may prove useful for Americans going to England, as well as for Englishmen going to America:—

Chapter I

| *Rule I.* (Very important.) Whenever you say “in” in English say either “on” or “to” in American.

(Note that all English people say, “on a ship,” except British naval officers. If you say, “on a ship,” to a British naval officer, — if, for instance, you say, “Jones is on the Dreadnought,” he will get very angry and correct you, and say, “*in* the Dreadnought.”)

There are one hundred and twenty-six exceptions to this rule, the most important of which is this: —

"To be in trouble" is not translated "to be on trouble" in American.

Rule II. The two most important words in American are "proposition" and "stunt."

Everything is either a proposition or a stunt.

There are no other rules.

Exercise

Translate the following story into American:—

THE MOUSE AND THE LION

Once upon a time a Mouse went and trod on a Lion who was asleep. The Lion, who had been late in going to bed the night before (translate "had a hang-over"), woke up, and after saying, "Bother you," seized the Mouse, and prepared to eat it.

But the Mouse, who was as brave as a mouse, said, "Let me go, you son of a Lioness; perhaps some day I may do you a good turn."

The Lion, having laughed the Mouse to scorn, let it go, saying: "A Mouse do a Lion a good turn. How witty!"

Some time afterwards, some hunters caught the Lion, and put it into a large net.

The Mouse, which happened to be there, hearing

the Lion groan, came and nibbled away the net (translate "got busy"), until the Lion was free.

"Don't you remember," said the Mouse, "my telling you that I might some day do you a good turn? You see how right you were not to eat me then."

"Yes, that's true," said the Lion, and it ate the Mouse.

Conversation

- | | |
|--|--|
| Did you hand the gardener's niece a lemon? | No, but I threw a bouquet at the brother of the carpenter. |
| Where is the son of the stockbroker? | He is on the street. |
| What is the son of the stockbroker doing on the street? | The son of the stockbroker is looking for hens' teeth. |
| Will the son of the stockbroker be stung? | Yes, good and plenty. |
| Is the son of the stockbroker a cooker? | No, the son of the stockbroker is a quitter. |
| Did the son of the baker call the son of the cook a four-flusher? | No, he called him a son of a gun. |
| Did the cousin of the carpenter make the brother-in-law of the blacksmith look like 30 cents? | No, he got his. |
| Is it up to you to put it over him? | Sure, Mike. |
| Did the son of the banker, when his father gave him his blessing for a birthday present, say it was a two-spot on the show-down? | Yes, and he said the gent was a piece of cheese. |

Any Number of Days

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Can you see anything to the daughter of the money-lender?	Yes, \$5,100,000.
Did the second cousin of the tough get outside four bottles?	No, the second cousin of the tough has been on the water-wagon for three moons.
Is the nephew of the crook a booze-fighter?	No, the nephew of the crook is a Bull-Mooser.
Will the uncle of the stockbroker lend me fifty dollars?	No, the uncle of the stockbroker is a tight-wad.

What differentiates the arrival at an American port or city from the arrival at the port or city of any other country is that in America you will find a whole lot of people who are there to meet your wants and your need. When you arrive in any foreign country, you are necessarily ignorant of nearly all those things which it is essential you should know. Now, in most countries you find nobody to help deal with that ignorance and to help you out of a situation created by it. In America, on the other hand, you will find a whole lot of people who are there to find out what you want to do, and to help you to do it in the most convenient and quickest way. They make a business of it. It pays them and it helps

you. It pays them to help you better than some one else helps you.

I have met in England quite a lot of people who are frightened at the thought of going to America, because they feel so ignorant of the conditions obtaining there. They need feel no such alarm. They will find a crowd of people competing among themselves as to who can best put them in the way of what they want to do. For instance, when I arrived at San Francisco, agents came on board the ship from all of the different railway lines, each of which was ready to fix up your journey for you and do anything you wanted. Each railway line wants you to travel by their line, so each line makes it his business that you should have every possible inducement to do so.

When I arrived at San Francisco, I thought I might have to proceed on my journey that same night, but I also wanted to get some money from the bank. I had arrived after the closing-time

of banks. In any other country this would have been an insuperable obstacle in the way of getting money. In San Francisco, not at all. The representative of the Santa Fé Line, which I wished to travel by, immediately took me to an office where I could get money on presentation of my letter of credit. The whole business was fixed up in about ten minutes; in most other countries it takes about half a day to draw on a letter of credit in a bank; it is quite impossible to draw on it after business hours.

As a matter of fact, I did not proceed on my journey that night. Here, again, there was no difficulty in cancelling my sleeping-berth.

All these things, which are a matter of course to the American, are unheard of in European countries. Nobody in Europe has made it a fine art to meet the convenience of travellers, with the exception, of course, of Messrs. Cook & Son; but when Cook's office is closed, it is closed, and nothing can open it. In America, as far as I can

see, nothing is ever completely closed. There will always be somebody somewhere to get you what you want.

In San Francisco, to-day, it is difficult to detect any traces of the fire which followed the earthquake. The enormous high buildings look as if they had always been there.

I drove to the hotel — the St. Francis — after having finished my business in the city, in a taxi. This is an expensive thing to do, but practically the only time you need do it is when you are coming from the boat. In spite of this, one sometimes wishes that taxis in America were cheaper. I think there is only one country in the world where it is within the means of the really poor to hire a cab, and that is — Russia. A poor man can take a cab just as easily as a rich man there, because there is no standard charge. The charge depends on the cabman, and sometimes he will drive you for almost nothing. I have often seen extremely poor people take cabs in Russia.

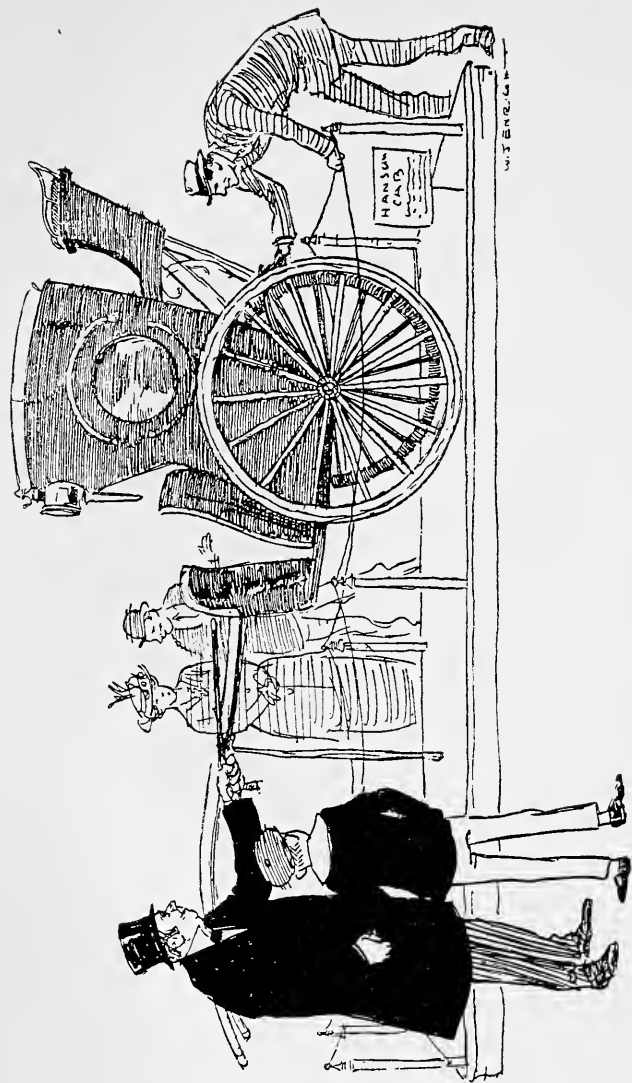
In Moscow, the cab-drivers very often own their cabs. They bargain with you before you get into the cab, as to the price of the drive, and if the driver does not agree to your price, he will not drive you.

New York, I suppose, is the only city now where hansom cabs still exist. In London, the only place where you can find one is the British Museum.

The first thing that struck me in San Francisco, and in America altogether, was the architecture. Many years ago, when I was in Florence, I was present in the house of a famous picture expert, when he and some well-known archæologists were discussing architecture, and some one who was present said he wondered whether there would ever be a Renaissance in architecture. One of the archæologists present said that this Renaissance was already happening in America.

I do not think there are any modern buildings

in Europe which can compare with the modern buildings in America. But apart from such masterpieces as the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, Pierpont Morgan's library, and the wonderful towers and skyscrapers in New York, it struck me that all the little houses you saw everywhere in the country round San Francisco and along the Sante Fé Railway track, and again in Long Island, were remarkable for their symmetry, their good proportions, and their daintiness. For instance, the country in New Zealand is covered with little bungalows; so is the country round San Francisco; but the difference between them is immense. There is no elegance or prettiness about the bungalows in New Zealand; they are heavy, unshapely, and monotonous; there is no taste or design about them; while in San Francisco, on the contrary, they are extremely varied, remarkable for their proportion, attractive-looking, and often extremely pretty. I believe that in the American character there is a



THE ONLY HANSOM CAB IN LONDON



deep sense of symmetry, shape, and neatness. I think there are evidences of this in all departments of American life: in the clothes of the men and women; in their neatness; in the quickness and neatness of their phrases and their humour; in the ingenuity of their machinery. There is a constant tendency to do away with what is unnecessary. In the finest American buildings what strikes one most is the absence of unnecessary ornamentation and detail of architect's "twiddles," which, in England, for instance, it is impossible to get architects to leave out, do what you will.

The Pennsylvania Railroad Station and Pierpont Morgan's library have the simplicity of Greek architecture.

To go back again to San Francisco, the climate is like champagne. There is gaiety in the air. The streets and the houses seem to radiate with amusement and cheerfulness. San Francisco is essentially a night city, and next to Paris, I

should say it was the gayest night city in the world.

I have met with a great deal of hospitality all over the world, but I have never met with people who take so much trouble for the stranger as the Americans. A friend of mine in New York met a friend of his, and asked this friend if he had any acquaintances in San Francisco, and if so, whether they could do anything for me. This friend of my friend's immediately sent a lot of telegrams to San Francisco, the result of which was that I instantly received cards of invitation to three different clubs, and that I was, that very night, entertained at the Pacific Union Club.

Here again was an example of beautiful architecture. The club is the last word of luxury, but the luxury is subordinate to taste and design. It is not over-ornamented. When new clubs are built in England, for the sheer purpose of luxury, such as, for instance, the Automobile Club, the result is ramshackle, shoddy, pretentious, and

hideous. There is nothing solid about it in taste or in design — merely luxurious gaudiness. I do not think there is in the whole of the world a club to compare in luxury, solid comfort, and fine proportion with the San Francisco Pacific Union. The food is as excellent as the architecture.

I was also taken to the Bohemian Club, which is famous for its great yearly entertainment in the redwood region.

There is also a wonderful home of athletics, which I visited, called the Olympic Club, which has not long been built. It contains every kind of bath you can imagine, and an enormous salt-water swimming-bath. It is the kind of bath you can imagine the ancient Romans built for themselves, and, indeed, American cities lead one to think that in many respects they are like ancient Rome: the quantity of marble employed; the detailed supply which is ever present to meet the demands and the needs of the individual.

During my second day in San Francisco, I was taken by a friend to see a ranch. We went by train, and then drove in a machine over the beautiful hills, right into the heart of the country. There is no country more beautiful than California. At this moment, although no rain had fallen for some time, the green was still vivid, the colours of the foliage mellow and soft and indescribably varied. The atmosphere of the hills softened the tints, and the harmony of colour was soft and gorgeous.

Riding back we passed through Stanford University, which possesses in its university buildings a striking example of American genius for architecture.

Next day I went to see the Australian Football Team play a local team. I do not think the American public is very highly interested in Rugby football, judging from the gate, which was not a very good one, as the introduction of the Rugby game in America is comparatively

recent. The local team played very well, but they did not seem familiar with some of the rules. The Australian boys had not yet recovered from their journey; nevertheless, they won.

After the match was over, I drove back with them to the Olympic Club, where they bathed.

The next day I went with some friends, first by ferry across the bay, then by train, till we reached the hills. We climbed up into the hills, where great vistas of gorgeous scenery lay beneath one, and then, walking down into the valley, we wandered about amongst the trunks of the huge topless redwood. A mountain railway took us down to the level again.

No words can describe the glory of the California scenery when you get up into these hills, which are covered with woods, and nothing can give you any idea of the sweetness and the freshness of the air there.

The next night I left San Francisco for Chicago. Before leaving San Francisco, I had dinner

at a restaurant called the "New Franks." It is a small restaurant, and it provides the best food I have ever eaten anywhere. When people speak in this way of a restaurant, they often mean that they happened on that day to be hungry and to have a good appetite. I was not hungry the night I went to the New Franks. I was not inclined to eat, but the sheer excellence of the cooking there excited my greed, and bade my appetite rise from the dead.

The cooking was perfect. There is no other word for it. When I say the cooking was perfect, I mean the food was perfectly cooked. I don't mean that there were dozens of messy entrées and highly spiced sauces. The food was of the simplest. I had soup (soup à l'oignon, a dream!), fish, and chicken, and I never tasted anything so good in my life.

Anatole France tells somewhere the story of a king, who, powerful as he was (or rather just because he was all-powerful), was condemned

to the luxury of a huge kitchen and a huge staff of cooks, who served him up elaborate tasteless dishes which meant nothing to him. And this was sad, adds Anatole France, for he liked good food (*Car il aimait la bonne chère*).

He would have found it at the New Franks, which is under the direction of Mr. Peter Kochely, a Dalmatian. His cook, or cooks, are Frenchmen, and I think a part of the success which his restaurant enjoys and the greater part of the excellence which it reaches are due to his eagle eye, which detects from a distance the likes and dislikes of every customer.

The trouble about small restaurants, when they are excellent, is, that they become well known, and are then so largely patronized that they become large and ultimately bad.

Once I was walking in Normandy with a friend, and we stopped in a very small town to have luncheon at a hotel. We asked if there was any wine. Yes, there was some wine, some

Burgundy, some Beaune. We tried a bottle, and it surprised us. Surprise is, in fact, a mild word to describe the sharpness of our ecstasy.

"Is not this wine very good?" we asked of the host.

"Yes, sirs," he answered, "it is very good. It is very old, but there is not much of it left."

Now, my friend was a journalist, who writes about French towns and French wines in the English press.

"Whatever happens," I said to him, "if you write about this town and about this wine, which I know you will do, you must not divulge the name of the town."

He agreed. He wrote an article about the town, he grew lyric over the wine, and looted all the poets of the world from Homer downwards for epithets and comparisons fit for it. And he did not mention the name of the place.

The year after, he returned to the same place and ordered a bottle of the Burgundy. There

was no more left. Some English gentlemen, the host told him, had come on purpose from England to finish it.

Now, I am sure some very intelligent man, and a man who was desperately fond of good wine, read the article, and guessed from the description the whereabouts of the little French town and the precious liquid.

The moral of this is: "Don't tell secrets in the newspapers; don't even tell half a secret."

The evening I left San Francisco, I had a small adventure. I asked a man the way to some street. He told me the way, and then, catching hold of my arm, he said, "You will stand me a drink."

I said I would, and we went into a drinking-saloon. Then he said, "I'm a bum. I was [and he stated his profession], and I've been fixed. I'm a booze-fighter." He added with engaging frankness that he was half drunk.

In the course of conversation, it turned out that we had a common friend, and had I not been

going off on the train, I would have taken him off to supper.

A singular proof of the smallness of the world.

Before taking leave of San Francisco, however, I want to say a word or two more. First of all about the clubs.

To a man who is used to the staid silence of London clubs, American clubs are exhilarating. I was present, for instance, at a dinner at the Bohemian Club, the "High Jinks Dinner," which takes place once a year. Every year the members of the club camp out in the redwood region, where the enormous trees grow which you see in pictures, and there, in an amphitheatre formed by these vast topless trunks, they give an open-air opera, written, composed, and played by themselves. Later on, when they come back to the city, they give a dinner in the club, followed by a theatrical entertainment, which is a burlesque on the opera given in the camp: also written, composed, and played by themselves.

It was at this dinner I was present, and spontaneous gaiety bubbled from that entertainment like champagne out of a bottle.

There was champagne in the concrete also, as well as in the abstract. But the gaiety was more spontaneous and more infectious than I have seen at any, even Bohemian, club in London. I fancy that San Francisco some day will be the great pleasure city of the world: the meeting-place of East and West, owing to its situation, its incomparable climate, its beautiful surroundings, and the microbe of gaiety which is in the air of the place. And then San Francisco is the golden gate which opens on to the enchanted realms of the Pacific.

I travelled to New York on the Santa Fé Line, meaning to stop and see the Grand Cañon, but, as it turned out, I had to go right on to Chicago.

Writers of American impressions generally deliver themselves of a solemn verdict on the

trains, the sleeping-car accommodations, and their merits and demerits.

"You won't like the sleeping-berths," said an American to me, before I started; "no Englishman ever does."

When I got on to the Pullman car, I found it was quite different from what I had imagined. I thought the berths would be stretched horizontally three quarters of the way across the car. The fact of their being placed sideways gives the sleeper a much broader berth than he has on European trains.

But I will discuss this presently.

There is one feature on American trains which is very different from anything in England and Europe — the attitude of the conductors. In England, and in most European countries, the conductor hovers round you for a tip. In America the conductor is an independent citizen; but I found him a singularly kind-hearted one.

I wanted to send a telegram to Chicago. He

did it for me. He "dead-headed" it. He found out everything I wanted to know. He was my guide, philosopher, and friend on my way to Chicago.

There is something very attractive about this warm-hearted human kindness which one meets with in America, and something very refreshing in the absence of servility.

It makes one breathe deep from his lungs to be among people who treat you as an equal, and expect to be treated as an equal by you.

There are some countries which profess democracy, where, under the pretence of treating you as an equal, the inhabitants take pains to treat you as an inferior, but this is not so in America.

Somebody — a historian, I believe — said that in the far future America and Russia would carry everything before them, owing to their driving power, which came from a fundamental kindness of heart. I believe this to be true.

Russia and America are the two most hospitable countries I have ever visited. I think the Russians and the Americans are the *kindest* people in the world, and their countries the most really democratic (whatever their respective governments may be).

I spent only a few hours at Chicago, where I wandered like an ant among the gigantic buildings; then I went right on to New York, along the beautiful Hudson River, all glorious in the October tints of its woods and foliage, and then I reached New York.

After my first two days in New York, I felt as the Queen of Sheba felt after she had been shown over King Solomon's private residence: there was no spirit in me. The place took my breath away, and I have n't yet got it back, but of that later.

New York: October

"THE difference between New York and London," a man once said to me, "is this: in New York, if you have a new idea, you can get it carried out at once; in London, if you have a new idea, you are up against a brick wall."

I believe this to be true. People in New York, and in America in general, are not afraid of new ideas, nor, indeed, of anything new. They are not afraid of the future. In England, if a man finds, for instance, that his profession is uncongenial to him, however certain he may be of the impossibility of his making a success of it, he will none the less very rarely give it up and try his hand at something else. The future alarms him. In America a man will think nothing of throwing up his profession twenty times running, until he finds something which does suit him.

I think the cause of this particular difference lies in the climate of America, and especially in

the climate of New York. Just as the climate of some places fills the whole system with an invincible desire to do nothing, with an insuperable languor and sloth, in the same way the climate of New York fills the body and mind with the desire to be up and about. It is the nimble air which produces the nimble wits: the stimulating atmosphere which creates, in the denizen of New York, the love of bustle, hurry, competition, and work. I am not saying this is either a good thing or a bad thing — I am merely noting and recording what struck me as being the main differences between New York and London. London, compared with certain cities, say Constantinople or Seville, seems a whirlpool of energy; compared with New York, it is slack. Compared with New Yorkers, Londoners are slackers. They go to bed earlier, they get up later, they do infinitely less during the day, and they do it more slowly. They waste more time. On the other hand, they suffer less from “nerve trouble.” They do not

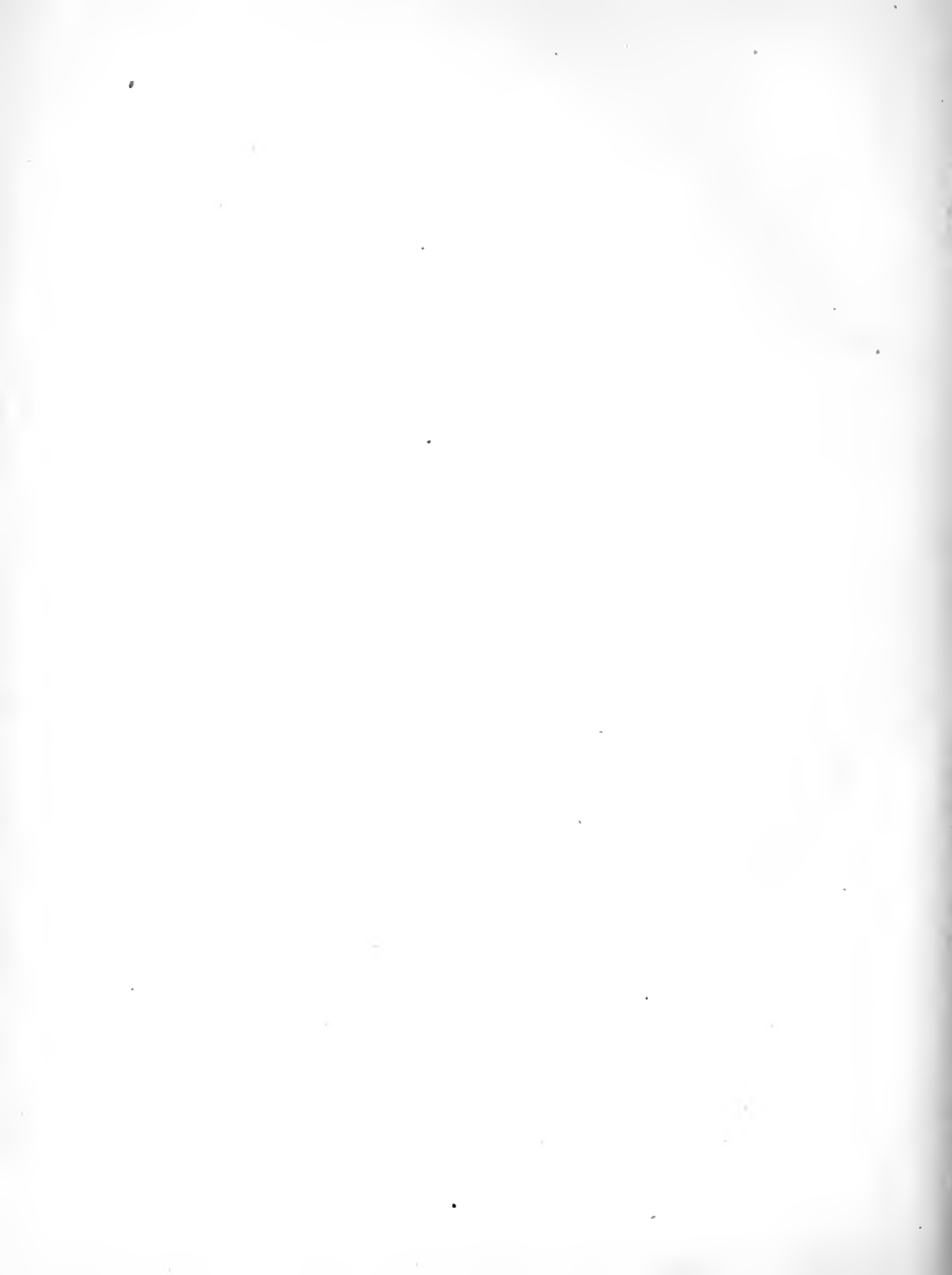
live on their nerves. In New York the people do. Very often, when you talk to some one who is employed, say in a store, in New York, you feel as if he was so highly strung as to be on the verge of breaking down; another turn of the screw and you feel he would break down. You never feel this in talking to a Londoner. In talking to a Londoner, you often want to give him a dose of H. G. Wells's "accelerator," the medicine which makes you live more quickly. In talking to a New Yorker, you often think he would be the better for a dose of some patent procrastinator, which would have the effect of making the wheels of his physical and mental machinery work slower.

A street boy, a child, in New York, is more nimble-minded, more agile in thought and expression, than the quickest-witted Englishman. He will have got there and be walking round him in thought before the Englishman has begun to express himself. I was much struck by the pa-

tience and tolerance shown to me by lift-boys and other children in dealing with some one so much heavier-witted and sluggish-minded than themselves, especially when one began cumbrously to explain something they had already understood some minutes before.

Does all this lead to a waste of energy, like a lot of soda-water bottles bursting their stoppers and fizzing into space? I don't know. It certainly leads to nervous breakdowns and nervous strain in general. The air in New York acts like a constant pick-me-up and enables you to do tiring things all day without making you feel tired. But some day or other you have, I suppose, to pay for this.

So much for the air and the atmosphere of New York — a delicious air to the newcomer; in any case, a tingling, stimulating, intoxicating atmosphere to the stranger; and air, as people say, like champagne. That depends, however, on what kind of champagne. It is not true to say



that all champagne is good. All port may be good, but all champagne is not.

I have already said something about New York architecture; but I forget what. I have not got the back part of my manuscript here. In any case, whatever I said, I know that I expressed admiration. When one sees a fine piece of modern architecture anywhere, one says, as a rule, it is very fine for a modern thing. Now one does not in the least feel tempted to say any such thing about the Pennsylvania Railroad Station or Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan's library. One feels—at least I feel—that whenever and wherever these two masterpieces had been made, they would legitimately have been ranked with the world's best. Had Pheidias designed the Pennsylvania Railway Station, he might have been proud. By the way, Pheidias was n't an architect, but only a decorator; well, let us say the best great architect of the best period, whoever he was. The striking thing about these buildings is, to

my mind, the fact that they are modern, but untainted with the influence of that horrible thing called "art nouveau," "modern style," and various other names. A style which, by the way, is German. It was born in Munich. Its parent on the male side was Japanese, on the female side a bastard descendant of William Morris via Maple. It was brought up in Germany, fostered by what are called decadent artists. These are artists whose work is a mixture of beer and sausage and Aubrey Beardsley. This style spread with incredible rapidity all over Germany and reached and flooded Russia, from Moscow to Harbin, and from St. Petersburg to Odessa. In Moscow it has produced huge shops, in St. Petersburg likewise. The result is not pleasing. It is full of useless details: ornaments which have no sense, curves and twiddles which have no meaning. This brings me to what I believe is the secret of the beauty of modern American architecture. It is, I believe, the ab-

sence of twiddles. By twiddles I mean any kind of unnecessary line, curve, moulding, arabesque, or ornament. If you ever have had any dealings with an English architect, you will know that when he brings you his plan, whether for the outside or the inside of a house, it will be full of twiddles. If you protest — if, for instance, you say you consider seven mouldings underneath the cornice on the ceiling to be too much — he will say it is necessary in order to break the line. This is n't true. Because the architects of ancient times did not find it necessary to "break the line" in this manner, nor do the architects of modern America. But that they do not is a very remarkable fact indeed. It is probably unique in the modern world, and the result of it is magnificent architecture.

American architecture is good because it is based on common sense. The worst kind of architecture is that which is based on nonsense. By nonsense I mean non-sense, the contrary of

sense. The kind of architecture which puts in a room a staircase which goes nowhere is non-sense. All the finest architecture in the world was made for a definite purpose and use, and made to suit that purpose and use. The pyramids of Egypt had a use; the only thing is, nobody knows now what it was, but it was something very definite; of that we can be certain from the enormous care which was taken to build them in accordance with certain mathematical calculations and according to a certain disposition and conjunction of the stars, the latitude, and the longitude. The idea that they were simply tombs is, I believe, difficult to support. But whatever the purpose was, we can be certain they had a purpose. They were not simply staircases leading nowhere. Now the Pennsylvania Railway Station *is* a railway station, and the architecture is subordinate to its use. The result is magnificent. Nothing would have been added to its use had it been filled with absurd lines and curves, twisted flowers, impos-

sible fruits and silly claws; and nothing would have been added to its beauty.

Then there are the skyscrapers. These are obviously useful, since the narrowness of the area in which New York is built makes it, if not necessary, at least highly desirable to economize as much space as possible, and since it is impossible to build broadly, the only way to acquire houseroom is to build skyward. And this has been done, again without the addition on the face of the buildings of a lot of unnecessary excrescences and ornaments. Mr. Pennell, who is an artist of fame, says that the sight of the skyscraper, from the seas, beats Venice. I don't care two pins for comparisons, for what seems to me amusing and appreciable is that we live in a world so rich in invention and so various that it produces and contains things so striking and so different as Venice and the skyscrapers of New York. That's what we ought to be thankful for. Another useful thing which seems to me

to result in a spectacle of amazing beauty is the illuminated advertisements on Broadway at night. There, by their quantity and their quality, they compose a fairy city which is constantly changing — a city of stars, glow-worms, fire-flies, and Roman candles. Just the right thing to light up a street which is almost exclusively devoted, at night, to theatres, restaurants, and places of amusement.

Is America comfortable? I have already said something about the trains; but since writing that I have been for two long journeys in the Orient Express. I suppose the Orient Express professes to represent and embody the acme of human luxury in the way of European travelling. It certainly represents, to my mind, the acme of human discomfort. The train is narrow. It shakes. The restaurant car is too small, and the food has a peculiar nauseating quality which is the special and exclusive invention and property of the International Sleeping-Car Company.

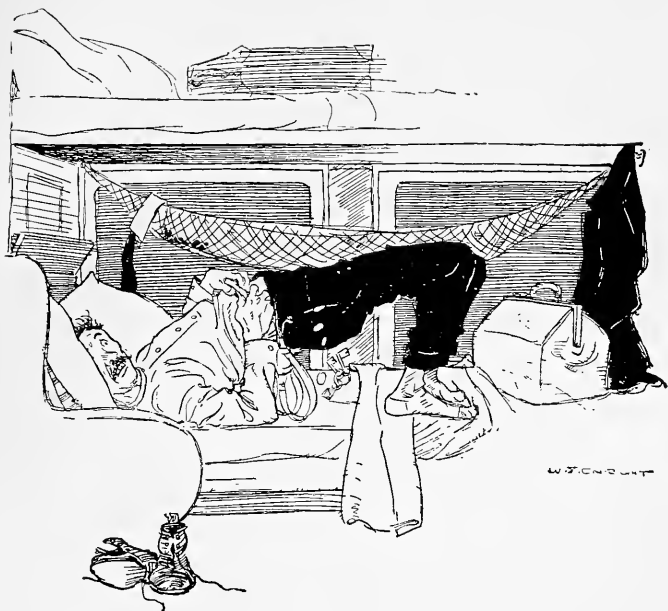
The curious thing is that the food is the same on whatever line you travel, so long as the restaurant car belongs to the International Sleeping-Car Company. It does not matter if you are travelling on the Nord Express, the Sud Express, or the Orient Express, you will get exactly the same dinner, and that same dinner will have the same taste — that unique taste you find nowhere else in the world. And, what is more, if you ever feed at one of the hotels belonging to the International Sleeping-Car Company, you will even there find the same meal and the same taste to it, the same taste pervading all the dishes — a peculiar kind of staleness, something slightly rancid and altogether unappetizing. One wonders who invented it and by what manner and means it was made universal. On the Trans-Siberian Railway, which goes from Moscow to Vladivostok, on certain days of the week there is a dining-car belonging to the International Sleeping-Car Company, and on other

days there is a dining-car belonging to the State. In the car belonging to the State you get good, ordinary food; the same kind of food as you can get at a hotel or a station buffet; but in the International Sleeping-Car Company's dining-car you get the same old meal and the same old taste. When I last travelled on the Orient Express, I was thinking the whole time, which is the most comfortable or the most uncomfortable, that or an American train. And I made the following schedule of advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of the Orient Express over an American express train: —

- (1) You have a compartment to yourself or, at the worst, shared with one other.
- (2) You can smoke where you like.
- (3) You have a washing-place opening off of your compartment.

Advantages of the American express over the Orient Express: —



UNDRESSING IN THE BERTH OF AN AMERICAN CAR IS AN
ACROBATIC FEAT



- (1) Your bed, when you are once in it, is much broader and more comfortable.
- (2) The food is incomparably better.
- (3) There is a constant supply of iced water within reach.

Disadvantages of the Orient Express: —

- (1) The bed is narrow. A hard pillow is put under the mattress so that it catches you in the small of the back. If you take it away, your head sinks into a draughty hole between the wall and the mattress. The blanket is folded double, so that it is impossible to cover yourself or the bed with it entirely. If you unfold it and use it single it is too thin to protect you from the cold.
- (2) You can smoke in your compartment, it is true, but if you want for a change to smoke in the smoking compartment, you will find the accommodations insufficient and unsatisfactory.

(3) There is no supply of newspapers.

Disadvantages of an American express:—

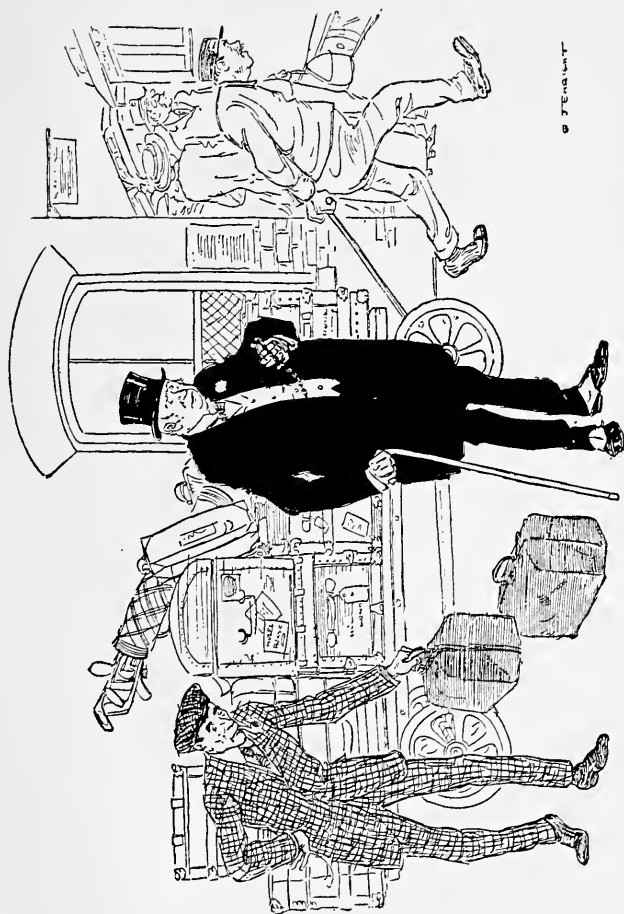
- (1) You have to wash in public. Passengers often use the washing-room as smoking-room in the morning and sit in it smoking cigars, while you have to shave. Some people find it quite impossible to shave in public. Shaving even in private makes them nervous, but shaving in public is for them a positive impossibility.
- (2) Undressing in the berth of an American car is an acrobatic feat.
- (3) You are at the mercy of the coloured man who looks after you. Either he bullies you or he does n't; but if he does n't he is generally slack and does n't look after you and your things. He makes up for inefficiency by an exaggerated familiarity.

There — that seems to me to be a very impartial schedule — the conclusion being that travelling on the Orient Express or on an

American express is equally uncomfortable. The truth is that all railway travelling is very uncomfortable anyhow. As Mr. H. G. Wells printed somewhere, railway travelling has n't really improved since the first trains were invented. The same essentials of discomfort remain: the narrowness, the dirt, the stuffiness, the vibration of the car. The car has not improved. The Pullman car is a more ingenious arrangement than the European car for the train, but it is not more comfortable for the passenger. What surprises me now is the things I remember Americans telling me about American trains before I went to America. I remember being told by them that American trains were full of hot and cold baths, which you could jump into at any minute ; that there was no difference in being on a train or in a club; that they were more comfortable than the best hotel and more luxurious than the fastest liners; that the best European cars would be considered to belong

to the fourth class in America. How different this is from what I have heard Americans say about American trains when they were themselves on the train in America!

With regard to baggage, I throw a large bouquet at the check system. It is infinitely more convenient than the European system, which I do not think has a single advantage, except the doubtful one of its being easier for you to lose your boxes. In England, for instance, there is a special profession to which certain people belong who are called "Peter-claimers," and whose whole business in life is to steal other people's baggage from railway stations. They drive to the station with an empty bag or with a bag full of stones. They put down their bag next to that of a banker, which they know to be full of gold, or next to that of a duchess, which they know to be full of pearls, rubies, and pink topazes. Then in their hurry they make a mistake, and, leaving their bag, they take away that of



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THEIR WHOLE BUSINESS IS TO STEAL OTHER PEOPLES' BAGGAGE



the banker or the duchess and drive home with it and never give it back, unless the reward offered be larger than the value of the contents of the bag and no questions be asked. This is called "Peter-claiming."

Another and more complicated way of doing it is this: You — the crook — that is to say, the "Peter-claimer" — have a particular kind of bag made which when placed on the top of any other kind of bag opens and swallows it up. I don't see how "Peter-claimers" could possibly do their work in a country where the check system prevails. However, human ingenuity is boundless, and doubtless a way would be found.

An American said to me, when I was travelling not long ago, that in America matters such as travelling, living in hotels, etc., had been reduced to perfection. I don't believe this to be true. What I do think is very often true is that the means has been perfected without any regard

having been paid to the end. The Pullman car is an example in point. If you regard the Pullman car as a device for travelling, a machine for holding as many people as possible and economizing the maximum of space in so doing, it is perfect. But as a vehicle for human beings to travel in in comfort it is imperfect. It contains great possibilities for discomfort quite apart from the coloured gentleman, who may or may not make life a hell to you during the journey. What is often left out in the calculations of ingenious devices of means of luxury is the human element, the human being. It is no good having an elevator that goes at a speed of five hundred miles an hour, if it makes you sick. It is no good having a train that goes so fast that you can neither read by day nor sleep by night in it. It is no good having a theatre so large that you cannot hear the actors speak. It is no good having a meal so rich that your appetite has gone after the first course.

I remember somebody once saying to me a long time ago that the Americans had attained to luxury by jumping over comfort. I think there is a certain amount of truth in this, and yet it would be foolish to call American hotels uncomfortable. They are not uncomfortable. Only there is this to be said: That to some people all hotel life is uncomfortable. They hate living in a crowd. They hate bustle, confusion, noise, the arrival and departure of people, etc. And there is certainly more hotel life in America than in other countries. And yet what a saving to the nerves, and to the temper, are so many of the devices and the arrangements in American hotels. The telephone, for instance: if you want a nice test of temper, try to get a number at the Hotel Cecil in London; or, better still, spend a happy morning in ringing up people on the telephone in Paris. In America it is either done for you at once or you know it cannot be done, and the matter is settled. Hotel life in America

seems to me infinitely better organized than in any other country in the world, with the possible exception of China. Because when you order a room at a Chinese hotel, in a small Chinese town, the room is built for you while you wait; you choose the style of room, and the paper, the carpeting, and all the furniture are put in during the day.

Another thing which is an immense saving of time and temper in an American hotel is the way in which it is possible to find out whether or not some friend of yours is staying there, without having to wait the best part of an hour, and without people being sent off in different directions, who come back much later on with contradictory reports.

If, though, on the one hand, in anything that concerns machinery contrivance, organization is better in America than elsewhere, anything that concerns the personal service of human beings is probably less good, owing to the simple



TRYING TO GET A NUMBER AT THE HOTEL CECIL

fact that there is no servant class in America; that servants in America are either coloured men or foreigners. This is a factor which makes for discomfort, because the existence of a great mass of human beings who have nothing else to do but attend to the wants of other human beings, obviously conduces to the comfort of those people whose wants are being attended to. For instance, it is more comfortable to arrive at a railway station in Russia, where there are about twenty willing railway porters to every traveller, than it is to arrive at 4 A.M., in Paris, where there is only one unwilling and extremely rude porter to attend to all the travellers. It is obviously more comfortable to be certain of finding some one to carry a heavy bag for you, if you are going into the suburbs by rail, than to be certain that you will have to carry it yourself. On the other hand, the absence of a servant class speaks well for the spirit of independence and initiative in the country. At least I suppose it does. Equality

is a good thing, but it can be abused just as much as its brother, liberty.

We all know the acts of tyranny which have been committed, and are committed daily, in the name of liberty. In the same way crime and misdemeanors are committed in the name of equality. In order to show you that he is as good as his master, Jack often treats his master as his inferior.

If I had to compare the comforts of life in England and America, and to sum up the matter briefly, I should say as far as life in public is concerned — that is to say, life in hotels, restaurants, clubs, and, perhaps, trains (in England the distances being short, the proposition is hardly the same), and certainly railway stations and buffets and all kinds of bars — everything you get in America is superior, but as far as life in private is concerned — country houses, cottages, farms, town houses, flats, and rooms — the comfort in England is incomparably greater.

Of course some people say that life in private — home life — does not exist in America at all. But that is the kind of generalization I distrust. Personally I think a small private house in England is a much more comfortable affair than a small private house in America. On the other hand, I think an American bar is much more comfortable and cheerful than our English public house. Again, I think there is a great difference between the English country house, owned by the English rich, and that owned in England by the American rich. In the homes of the American rich you will rarely find a room in which it is possible to sit down with comfort.

American clubs, again, are far more human and cheerful than English clubs. Anything more depressing than the average English club can scarcely be imagined: a series of rooms in which old men in different corners grunt, frown, and snore — the rest is silence. In American clubs

you feel that everybody is alive and that people go to clubs not to avoid the society of their fellow creatures, but, on the contrary, to enjoy it. And that, after all, was the origin and the initial purpose of all clubs, because if a man wants solitude he can stop at home. But I forgot — some men are married. That, of course, certainly changes the question.

In the category of human comforts belongs the food question. I don't suppose it is necessary at this time of the day to sing the praises of the food you get in America. America has a national food, containing a quantity of delicious dishes you can get only in America, and Americans are, thank heavens, not unconscious of the fact. England has a national food also; but, alas! how rarely you get English food, good English food, in England, and how often you get a shockingly bad imitation of French food — a succession of entrées which a wit once said were like tepid lawn-tennis balls. How excellent a thing,

on the other hand, is a fried sole, toasted cheese (like that you get at the "Cheshire Cheese"), English cold beef, English bacon, roast grouse, and currant-and-raspberry tart. These are all things which I believe you can get nowhere out of England; nowhere meat at such a peculiar pitch of perfection.

[There was once upon a time an English statesman (it was either Lord Melbourne or Lord Palmerston) who asked a schoolboy what his ideal luncheon would be. The boy thought for a long time and said, "Roast duck, with peas and new potatoes, and then some raspberry-and-black-currant tart." And the statesman, struck by the extraordinary wisdom of the reply, prophesied a great future for the boy, who was none other than — well, I quite forget. But it was not Winston Churchill.

[It is on record, I believe, that Macaulay gave a house-warming dinner to two friends in Albany, and after expending much thought and all the

resources of his immense erudition on the subject, came to the conclusion that the following would be the ideal menu for the occasion. The season was autumn.

Mulligatawny Soup
Broiled Turbot
Roast Partridge
Toasted Cheese

I once asked a Frenchman who, at the time, was supposed to have, and rightly, the best cook in Paris, where and what was the best dinner he had ever had. He said the best dinner he had ever had was in a small country house in England and had consisted of a fried sole and roast grouse.

If I were Emperor of Rome, and had at my disposal the manual labor of ancient Rome, the skilled cooks of all nations, and the railway service of the world, and if I liked to give a perfect dinner, I should arrange it thus.

The season is, let us say, autumn or winter.

A cocktail made by an American

Hors d'œuvre, consisting of

fresh caviare from Russia, prawns from Seville

Oysters: Blue Points

Soup: Bortsch, made by a peasant of Little Russia

Cold lobster

Whitebait

Veau à la bourgeoise, cooked by a

Frenchwoman from a farm

Roast grouse — Corn on the cob

Salad, made by a Frenchman

Marrow bones

Toasted cheese

A German apple tart

Mince pies — Indigestion

That is, perhaps, enough about food and the comforts of life. However the comforts of life in America may stand with regard to those in other countries, they are in America very remarkable, very characteristic, and worthy of study and still more of experience.

THE END

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